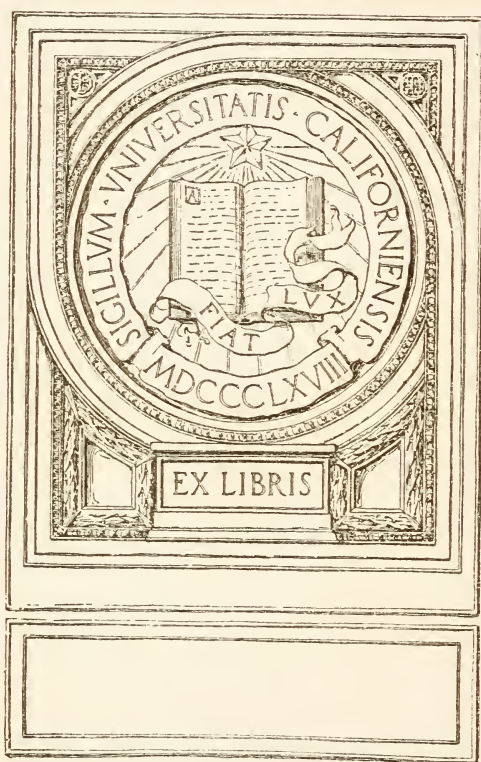


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# R E P O R T.

ON A

PROPOSITION TO MODIFY

THE

## PLAN OF INSTRUCTION.

IN THE

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, *Univ*

MADE TO THE

Faculty of the University.

Read before the Faculty, Sept. 21, and before the Board of Trustees,  
Sept. 26, 1854.



NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON & CO., 346 AND 348 BROADWAY.

1855.

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NEW YORK.

## PREFATORY.

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At a meeting of the Faculty of the University of Alabama, held on Friday, the 14th day of July, 1854, the following paper was read by the President :—

The President of the Board, and the Trustees now present, are unanimously in favor of modifying the present system of instruction in the University of Alabama, and respectfully request the Faculty of the University to report to an adjourned meeting of the Board, on Monday, the 25th of September next, the plan and details for the initiation and continuance of a system, conforming, as near as our circumstances will allow, to the arrangements in the University of Virginia.

JOHN A. WINSTON.  
WM. H. FORNEY,  
JOHN N. MALONE.  
ED. BAPTIST.  
H. W. COLLIER.

*University of Ala., July 12, 1854.*

This paper was referred to a committee appointed by the President, consisting of Professors F. A. P. Barnard, John W. Pratt, and George Benagh ; which committee was instructed to report to the Faculty at an adjourned meeting, to be held on Monday, the 18th of September. On that day the Faculty accordingly re-assembled ; but adjourned without transacting business, in consequence of the absence of the President. At a called meeting, on Thursday, the 21st, the committee reported in explicit compliance with the terms of the request of the Board of Trustees ; and the report which follows, was subsequently presented by Professor Barnard, on behalf of himself and Professor Pratt, of the majority. It was ordered by the Faculty, at a subsequent meeting, that this document should be communicated to the Board of Trustees. The report was accordingly read before that body, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 26th and 27th of September. The deliberations of the Board resulted, however, in the adoption neither of the plan originally suggested in the paper above given, nor of that recommended in this report ; but of one



which may perhaps be regarded as an experiment substantially new ; conservative, in the main, of the features of the existing college system, but providing opportunity for such departures from it, in particular cases, as the judgment of the Faculty shall approve. The nature of this plan may be more particularly gathered from the following ordinance :—

1. That the studies now pursued in the University, the extent to which they are carried, and the number of recitations heard by each officer, shall remain as at present established, as near as may be.

2. That twelve recitations shall be heard upon each day of the week, except Sunday. The Faculty may, in their discretion, reduce the number of recitations upon Saturday, so that there be not less than four upon that day.

3. That the recitations of each day shall be assigned by the Faculty to the different hours in such a manner that a student, by taking three recitations per day, may accomplish all the studies taught in the University in four years. In doing this, the recitations of the Professor of Ancient Languages, the Tutor of Ancient Languages, and the Professor of Modern Languages, may be assigned to the same hours ; so, also, those of the Professors of Mixed Mathematics and Pure Mathematics ; also, those of the Professors of Chemistry and Geology. All other recitations must be assigned to hours at which no others are held.

4. Each student under the age of twenty-one years, desiring to select a particular study, shall be required to produce from his parent or guardian, if he has one, a written declaration of the special object of the applicant in coming to the University ; and the Faculty shall then prescribe for him the course of study which will accomplish his object in the shortest time and in the best manner, having regard to the next two provisions.

5. Every student must have three recitations a day, as near as may be.

6. A student shall not enter upon the study he may select, until he has passed such an examination as will satisfy the Faculty that he may, by proper application, prosecute it successfully.

7. Upon a student's completing, and standing an approved examination upon, all the studies in any department, he shall receive the degree of graduate in that department, and a certificate bearing the seal of the University, and delivered at commencement, in the usual mode.

8. The degree of Bachelor of Arts shall be conferred upon a student only after he shall have passed approved examinations upon *all* the studies taught in the University.

9. Honorary degrees shall not be conferred by this University, except by a unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees.

10. All laws or ordinances, or parts of the same, now existing, which conflict with the foregoing ordinance, are hereby repealed.

# REPORT.

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THE undersigned, a majority of the Committee appointed by the Faculty of the University of Alabama, to consider and report on a request emanating from certain members of the Board of Trustees, in regard to a re-organization of the plan of instruction in the University, having consented to unite with the minority in a literal compliance with the request alluded to, and having discharged that duty, beg leave respectfully to present certain distinct views of their own, having a bearing on the general question raised by the proposition referred to them, and also on the considerations out of which, as they have reason to believe, this proposition has grown.

Change, it is hardly necessary to say, will never be sought for its own sake. Whenever and wherever there arises a steady and earnest demand for a new order of things in regard to matters which deeply concern mankind, whether they be affairs of state or systems of education, it is obvious, from the very nature of the interests involved, that the degree to which this demand is real and sincere, must be matter of easy ascertain-

ment. And when, to a majority of the community, the existence of a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the actual state of things is entirely unsuspected and imperceptible, it may well be questioned whether the impressions of a few, however decided, can be wisely accepted as of more weight in evidence than the tranquil contentment of nearly all beside.

It is by no means the belief of the undersigned, that those members of the Board whose names are appended to the request, which has led to the appointment of this Committee, are all of them, by previous conviction, in favor of the introduction into this University of the system of which they ask for the details. It is quite sufficient to suppose that the request was dictated by a desire, on the one hand, to know explicitly and definitely what it is which it is proposed to substitute here, in place of a system that, if not the best, has, nevertheless, the sanction of some centuries of experiment, and the present support of the general suffrage; and an equal desire, on the other, to satisfy the outside advocates of change, that the Board are always willing to examine any project for the improvement of the University, which, in the view of any friend of the cause of education, may deserve their deliberate attention. Those members of the Board to whom this inquiry is owing, are therefore regarded by the undersigned as occupying, equally with their colleagues, the attitude of judges, whose opinions are yet to be expressed, and not that of partizans, who are waiting only to act upon a judgment already formed.



The friends of the University, whose suggestions to the members of the Board have probably occasioned the present inquiry, appear to have been laboring under some impressions which a candid examination of facts cannot fail to dispel. These are—

1st. That the actual state of the University is not prosperous ;

2d. That the number of students is smaller than is usual in colleges of equal standing in years ;

3d. That there really exists an outside demand for a radical re-organization of the University, powerful enough, if resisted, to sweep down opposition before it ;

4th. That neither the Trustees nor the Faculty have heretofore given thought to the possibility of introducing improvement into the institution ; but that both bodies have manifested indifference to the spirit of progress which characterizes the age.

In speaking of the prosperity of an institution of learning, the general public seem to regard but a single criterion—that of the number of students it attracts, or succeeds in retaining. But this is a test which serves very ill to enable us to judge either of the value of the institution as a part of the educational machinery of the State, or of the esteem in which it is held by the surrounding people. It is perfectly well known to the undersigned, that many who would be students of the University are prevented from being so now, not because of any objection to the course of study here

prescribed, but because of what they please to consider the too great severity of the tests imposed to secure a certain respectable degree of scholarship and attainment. Could the Faculty be induced to think it wise to permit a material degradation of the standard of scholarship insisted on in this University, there can be no doubt that, without any other change whatever, an immediate and large increase of numbers might be realized. It is often charged that this Faculty is more severe in its exactions than that of any other college in the Southwestern States. Upon such an assertion it is not for the undersigned to express any opinion. The Faculty of the University of Alabama have acted without reference to what may or may not be demanded elsewhere. They have aimed but at the single object of making this institution one in which scholars may be formed worthy to be compared with those who issue from the celebrated and time-honored Universities of the older States. Whether in this they have succeeded or not, there can be no doubt, since it is matter of pretty frequent complaint, that they have set up here what is generally regarded as a high standard of scholarship. They have secured to the University of Alabama the respect of the surrounding community, and that of sister institutions throughout the country. To say that, in regard to the great ultimate ends for which colleges are instituted, there has been any failure here, or that there exists a want of a prosperity of the noblest kind, is at once unreasonable and absurd.

But in regard to the point of numbers. There is not, we must admit, a large number of students in this University, if we compare catalogues with Harvard or Yale, or even with the State institutions of North and South Carolina. But Harvard and Yale have several thousand living alumni; and the two last-mentioned colleges have several hundred—perhaps not less than a thousand—each. All of these old institutions are, or have been, the direct beneficiaries of the States to which they belong, or of many of their wealthy citizens; and they thus secure that interest and those sympathies from the surrounding communities, which all men bestow upon the objects they have befriended and cherished. The adult population of Alabama is yet mainly immigrant; the affections of the fathers of our youth still cling around the homes of their childhood, and their spirits still do homage at those shrines of learning, where they themselves, perhaps, were first imbued with the love of letters. In addition to this, there are growing up in this State, as in every other, institutions endowed and patronized by particular religious denominations; which cannot fail, even though they should offer advantages for mere intellectual culture much inferior to those which the University presents, to draw around them many who would otherwise swell our numbers. Nor has this institution yet a hold on the feeling of State pride, such as so powerfully sustains the State Universities of the two Carolinas and of Virginia. The population itself is too heterogeneous,



and too newly thrown together, to have learned even to recognize the feeling; and this feeling, so far as it is represented at all, is at present but humbly represented by a sort of sentiment of common interest. All these considerations are unfavorable to the growth of an institution erected in the midst of a people like this, by funds not contributed by themselves, interesting them by no associations connected with the past, and allying itself with no sympathies of theirs which may be linked with the present, or may extend to the future.

Under circumstances like these, ought it not to be a great thing, if the University is able to command from Alabama an attendance as large, in proportion to population, as the University of Virginia commands from the people of Virginia? The name of the Sage of Monticello ought itself alone to be a sufficient guaranty for a host of youthful devotees at the altar which he reared to learning. The tone of exultant pride, in which every Virginian alludes to this enduring monument of the wisdom of Jefferson, would seem to indicate that no other institution could have a charm like this, to fill the imagination of a native of the Old Dominion. And, to leave speculation aside, it is in fact universally admitted, that the University of Virginia is a flourishing and prosperous institution. Now, in comparing that University with ours, in regard to numbers, we must manifestly reject from both catalogues all students from beyond the limits of the respective States. We must remember how many of

the sons of Virginia have emigrated South and West; we must remember what attractive associations cluster around the name of the patriot founder; we must bear in mind how easily, by means of the immense railway system of the Atlantic States, students even from our own borders may reach the Virginia University, more quickly and more agreeably than they can our own. Of this species of advantages we have not one. Hence we confine the comparison strictly to the numbers furnished by the respective States in which the Universities are situated, alone.

The catalogue of the University of Virginia, last published (for 1853-54), shows a total, of students belonging to Virginia, of 289. But, as a considerable number of these are students of law and medicine, they certainly, in a comparison like this, are not to be counted. By a careful enumeration, it appears that the number of these professional students belonging to Virginia is 126. The students in the Department of Arts are therefore only 163. According to the United States Census for 1850, the total white population of Virginia was, in that year, 894,800. The same authority gives the total white population of Alabama, at the same time, as 426,514. According to these figures, if the University of Virginia is prosperous while the State furnishes it *one hundred and sixty-three* students of Arts, ours ought to be equally so, so long as we have as many as *seventy-seven*. But the catalogue of the University of Alabama, published last November,

contains the names of *ninety-eight* students of Arts from Alabama; and, if we add those who were admitted after the publication of the catalogue, we shall have *one hundred and seven*. Is there any ground, then, for asserting that our numbers are feeble; or that Alabama does not patronize her own University as well as other States do theirs? Should the assertion be still adhered to, it can be established only by comparison with some State institution in which the close, instead of the open, system of instruction is maintained; and hence the whole inference, which it has been sought to derive from this fact, will fall to the ground.

In truth, the comparison just made is most disastrous to the claims of the Virginia system, as it respects its actual popularity. For, be it observed, a main reason why we are urged to adopt that system is, that the existing one is so hopelessly unpopular as to render some destructive outbreak in the legislature, or among the people, all but absolutely inevitable. Yet, unpopular as it is (if these assumptions are true), it is manifestly, as the figures themselves show, nearly fifty per cent. more popular in Alabama, than the system of the Virginia University is in Virginia.

Upon the question of success as tested by numbers, these remarks may, perhaps, be esteemed sufficient. Yet there are one or two passages relating to this point, in the report made to the Board of Trustees of this University at their session in July, 1852, by the President of the University, so forcible and conclusive,



that, as they are brief, the undersigned cannot refrain from here reproducing them.

"Numbers," says Dr. Manly, "in an institution depend upon its age and history, its position, the character and personal influence of its officers—especially of its graduates—the circumstances and character of the communities surrounding it, and upon facts and relationships so various that *the question of organization is left comparatively a very small influence.*" And again:

"In the earlier periods of its history, numbers have not constituted a conspicuous feature in any college. The first half-century, even, of the oldest and most popular of them, would not present an average of numbers disparaging to our own, in the short period reckoned by the University of Alabama. In Harvard, from 1806 to 1810 inclusive, a period of five years not unfavorable for the comparison, and when the college was 170 years old, the average number of undergraduates was 211." Once more:—

"Compared with other colleges, however, this University has its fair average. Of 121 colleges in the United States, reported in the American Almanac of 1850, 78 have fewer than were our numbers of that year, and only 38 had more. \* \* \* In a document presented to the Board of Education in the city of New York, 1851, of 53 colleges (comprising the older, the endowed and popular institutions in the United States), 26 had more and 26 had fewer than our numbers of that year."

To these extracts may be added the following, from a letter addressed, by the Faculty of this University, to Hon. W. K. Baylor, chairman of the Committee on Education of the Senate of Alabama, in January, 1843: "No college in the United States," say the Faculty, "ever yet went into operation, which, in the years of its infancy, was not as limited in this respect as the University of Alabama. Many have been much more so. For fifty years from its foundation, the University of Harvard graduated, annually, on an average, fewer than seven individuals. For twenty years the average number of graduates at Yale college was about five. A young college, in a newly settled country, will never, in its infancy, be numerously attended. The demand for a high order of education among the people is neither great nor general. \* \* \* If such a college prepare, every year, but a few men to instruct others, the immediate fruit of its operations may seem indeed to be small; but through those same men it is still to operate through a long series of years, and to carry the benefits of knowledge to hundreds and thousands. \* \* \* How are the people ever to be made ripe for learned institutions, but by first preparing the teachers who are to diffuse among them the elements of knowledge? The streams which flow into the ocean are fed by the evaporation of the ocean itself. And the students who throng the halls of colleges, are brought there by the learning which, silently as the vapor rises from the sea, these colleges have scattered

through the land." And further: "Great numbers constitute, in general, the most trifling and shadowy and insignificant evidence of excellence in a school, which can be adduced. And if a seminary is young, and is situated in a new country, and nominally exacts some slight intellectual training as a condition of membership, great numbers, suddenly collected, furnish a very ominous indication as to the fidelity of its administration."

But it has been affirmed, and it is so still, with great positiveness and emphasis, that there exists extensively, among the people of Alabama, a feeling of dissatisfaction with the plan of instruction pursued in this University, and a disposition to originate measures which shall result in forcing, should not the Board conciliate it by yielding, a change.

That there may exist a general and somewhat vague desire for the introduction of some improvements upon the present system, the undersigned are not disposed to deny. They are the less so, because of the fact, well known to them, that a similar feeling has long existed among the members, both of the Board and of the Faculty themselves. It has been felt that the present course of study is too greatly burthened; and that the University of Alabama, in common with most or all of the colleges of the country, has gone on increasing the amount of its exactions from its students, until of the two evils—superficial teaching on the one hand, and overtasking the strength on the other—one or the

other seems almost unavoidable, and both are not unfrequently more or less experienced. That some improvement ought to be made here, the undersigned will not undertake to dispute. Of what precise nature or form the change ought to be, they propose to consider in the proper place. Every college which proposes to carry its students through a definite course in each distinct department—the University of Virginia as well as the University of Alabama—must be yet compelled, by force of circumstances, to look into and to correct the evil which here undoubtedly exists. The best manner of attempting to do this, has been subject of discussion between one or both of the undersigned and members of the Board of Trustees, at various times, for years; and plans have been actually drawn up by them and committed to paper. The difficulty and delicacy of the undertaking, and a natural unwillingness to press views which, while generally approved, might have failed to carry conviction in all their details, has hitherto prevented these discussions from leading to any important practical result.

But while the undersigned fully recognize the existence of a general desire for the improvement of the system of instruction which actually exists in this University, as having long partaken of that desire themselves, they by no means admit that there has yet appeared any evidence of a wish or design, on the part of the people, to subvert the system itself, and to erect upon its ruins, a fabric of so loose construction, and so



doubtful a character, as that of the University of Virginia. If any such disposition has appeared in any quarter, it is believed not to have been indicative of any general dissatisfaction, nor to have originated with the people themselves. The undersigned entertain great confidence in the conviction which they here express; and that for several reasons entirely satisfactory to them. In the first place, they, like other citizens, mingle more or less with the people, and they do not entirely neglect to correspond with intelligent gentlemen at a distance from Tuscaloosa. While they confess that there have come to them, from time to time, through such channels, complaints of one description or another, in regard to the University,—complaints even of those evils connected with the course of instruction, which the undersigned have just signalized,—they are free to say that, until since this subject was referred to the Faculty by the members of the Board of Trustees assembled here at the late Annual Commencement, they never received, from any source of information whatever accessible to them, the slightest hint of the propriety of any sweeping change, or the most doubtful suggestion of the expediency of introducing here, the system of the University of Virginia. This, it is true, is merely negative evidence; but in a question of great public interest, like the present, negative evidence has weight. That which agitates a whole people, cannot but be in the mouths of indi-

viduals; and that of which men talk, those who mingle with men must hear.

That there can be no popular demand for the introduction of the Virginia system here, is further evident from the fact, that not one in twenty of the people knows what the Virginia system is. It certainly is not what it is apparently believed by some to be; and that is, a system which permits any student to pursue any study selected by himself or his guardians, at any time, to any extent, and with any rapidity he pleases. And the prevalent misapprehension on this subject, amounts really to a serious evil; since the expectations which have been held out regarding the plan are sure, should it be adopted here, to be sadly disappointed. But on this point the undersigned propose to speak more fully in its proper place.

The absence of any popular demand for this species of change is still further evidenced by the tone of the public press, both before and after the request of the members of the Board, who were present in July, was laid before the public. Nothing can be more certain than that, throughout the collegiate year of 1853-'54, down to the month of May, when some slight troubles entirely connected with *discipline* elicited some discontented remarks, not one word appeared in any public print in Alabama, in relation to the University (and the notices were many), which was not congratulatory and almost exultant, in view of the steady improve-

ment of the Institution in prosperity, and in view of its well-established reputation for thorough and judicious methods of instruction, and for the sound and substantial attainments of its students. And in the expressions of discontent just alluded to, and which were directed entirely toward police and other regulations and measures for the government and not for the instruction of the under-graduates, it is worthy of remark how generally, and in fact how almost universally, the conductors of the press mingled with their words of dissatisfaction the regret that these events should have befallen at a moment when the University, having lived down its disasters, had become so proudly prosperous, and had succeeded in raising itself so deservedly high in the confidence of the people of Alabama. Whoever has had access to the public prints of the State generally for the past twelve months cannot but be forcibly struck with the truth of these reminiscences. The undersigned therefore assert, without fear of contradiction, that, if the tone of the public press can be regarded as in any degree an index of that of public sentiment among a people, then it is so far from being true, that there is a popular demand for the subversion here of our time-honored course of instruction for the sake of introducing one not even known to a majority of the people, that the feeling of the masses has been entirely the other way,—entirely one of satisfaction and content.

If, further to test this question, we compare the

expressions of opinion put forth by the same organs, explicitly upon the proposition brought before them in the published request of members of the Board of Trustees to the Faculty, which has occasioned this inquiry, we shall find that nearly every press, in which the subject has been elaborately treated, has been decided in disapprobation of the change. Some of the reasonings on the subject, which the proposition has elicited, have proceeded from alumni of the University; and the undersigned hazard nothing in saying that they have manifested an ability which would do honor to graduates of any college in the Union.

Upon the question whether the Trustees or the Faculty have ever been indifferent to improvement, or averse to it, some remarks have already been incidentally made. More specifically it may here be stated, that, in order to meet an alleged necessity or demand, the Trustees, with the cordial assent of the Faculty, in the year 1844, established a special school for the instruction of such young men as might desire to become teachers without completing the entire collegiate course. A plan of instruction was devised for this school, which was designed to extend, in whole, over three years; and the Faculty were authorized at their discretion to issue to the students, at their departure, certificates of proficiency. Extensive publication was made of this arrangement, in the catalogues and circulars of the University and in the public prints; *but not one student ever volunteered to avail himself of*



*its benefits.* In the year 1846, the Trustees created a Department of Law, and elected a Professor. It was thought that a professional school in this department might be successful in Tuscaloosa, and that its success might exert a reflex influence favorable to the prosperity of the Faculty of Arts. But no sufficient number of students ever presented themselves to induce the Professor to commence his course, and by degrees the school of Law (which the undersigned believe was never abolished) passed out of recollection.

The report of Dr. Manly, from which some brief extracts have already been given, is another evidence of the solicitude which the Board of Trustees have always manifested for the improvement of the University, and for the extension of "the benefits of the Institution to a greater number of the citizens of the State." In compliance with the request of that body, the President of the University, in company with another officer, made, during the summer of 1851, an extensive journey through various States, attending in the meantime the National Educational Convention at Cleveland, and gathering, wherever he went, the results of a great variety of experiments carefully made under the eyes of experienced educators. All this he embodied in a report read to the Board of Trustees only two years ago, and printed by their order. It is absurd to suppose that such an amount of pains was taken for nothing; or without a sincere purpose to profit by the

experience of others, and to introduce here any changes, whatever they might be, which should seem to hold out a promise of increasing the usefulness of this University. Yet so little encouragement did the carefully arranged statistics of that report hold out to the spirit of innovation, that, after the reading of it, not one single voice was lifted in behalf of any departure whatever from the existing system. It has not been without considerable surprise that the undersigned have witnessed the inexplicable fact, that, after a lapse of only two years from the presentation of that report, the same Board who listened to it and ordered it to be printed, have seriously entertained a proposition, which the statistics contained in that document demonstrate to be ruinous in its tendencies to the last degree.

Since the purpose of Dr. Manly in his report was simply to state facts with their natural inferences, and not to dictate measures to the Board of Trustees, it may possibly be objected, that those who take the view of its bearing here expressed fail to understand his statements, or reason perversely from his figures. Such an objection will hardly be thought to lie against the inferences of gentlemen who peruse the pamphlet at a distance, and whose habits of mind and whose acquaintance with colleges may be presumed to fit them peculiarly to form a correct judgment. Bishop Potter, of Pennsylvania, in a document (printed, but not published) relating to the University of that State, which he has kindly communicated to the undersigned, after

speaking of Dr. Manly's report as "the fruit of much laborious and careful research," and as "a most valuable contribution to the cause of a higher education," characterizes it as an "able and *most conservative* report." E. C. Herrick, Esq., A. M., Librarian and Treasurer of Yale College, remarks incidentally (in a private letter), of the question now pending, "I cannot but think that Dr. Manly's report would be a very satisfactory refutation of the proposed plan." And still more emphatically observes Dr. Swain, of North Carolina, in the conclusion of a most valuable letter on the general question, "I read his [Dr. Manly's] pamphlet two years ago with pleasure and profit; and took it for granted that his argument and authority would be considered conclusive by the managers of your institution. Instead of indulging in these hasty expressions of opinion, I might well have contented myself with a simple indorsement of his well-considered views."

But, notwithstanding all this, the whole question is opened up again, and the undersigned are absolutely constrained, against their will, to go back to first principles, and to retrace all the steps of a discussion which they had hoped, during their day, never to see revived in this institution.

Let it be understood in the outset, that it is in no spirit of unfriendliness or opposition to institutions for professional, technical, special, or partial education, that the undersigned are disposed to remonstrate against the transformation to which it is proposed to subject this

University. If there is a demand for such institutions, let them be created; if it is true, as is so frequently asserted, that hundreds of young men are absolutely cut off from any opportunity to acquire the education they need, because the University will not (it would be more just to say, cannot) give it to them, then there should be no delay in providing the facilities which their case requires. It cannot be that means are wanting, or ever will be so, if the alleged demand be real, to endow and furnish schools fashioned in the strictest conformity to the popular dictation; for schools to which hundreds are waiting to resort so soon as their doors shall be opened, can never fail to prove eminently lucrative, considered merely as pecuniary investments. If, then, this demand be real, there exists not the slightest reason for insisting that the University shall provide for it; and if it be not, the argument in favor of change crumbles away into nothing.

To exhibit, however, the entire and true basis upon which the undersigned rest their opposition to the proposed transformation, it is necessary to bring prominently into view what is the distinctive characteristic of a University,—what is that peculiar function which it is specially empowered, and, in fact, created, to fulfill; and the possession of which may perhaps serve to explain why it is that this frequent demand for popular, easy, or optional courses of study, should be continually directed against them, instead of venting itself in the very obvious and effectual mode of providing institu-



tions of the kind professedly required. This peculiar function is the granting of degrees; and in the exercise of this, the University does all that is essential to its office. The University of London, at the present time, confines itself to the discharge of this single function; and the early history of all the old Universities of England, or of the continent of Europe, shows that, while they certainly furnished instruction, and their instructors were excessively numerous, the only recognized point of contact between the University as a body and the individual student was that in which the latter presented himself as a candidate for graduation. The value of the degree conferred consisted, of course, as it does still, in the fact that it stamped the graduate as a scholar—a man well versed in what were called the liberal arts, and in philosophy. By what course of study he had attained the mastery of these subjects, mattered not then, as, in point of fact, in London, and to all intents and purposes in Oxford and Cambridge, it matters not now: provided the candidate, on the application of certain severe tests of his scholarship and knowledge, was found to be worthy of the degree, it was awarded as a matter of right. These tests were examinations, extended and thorough, oral and written. At the present time, the University of London employs salaried examiners, who have no other duty than to ascertain the merits of applicants for the honor of graduation.

In the older Universities it used to be held, that

education is not complete and thorough until the student has been disciplined not only in receiving but in imparting knowledge. Every Bachelor of Arts was required to teach certain books or subjects, in order that he might become a Master; and "every Master or Doctor was compelled by statute, and frequently on oath, to teach for a certain period, which was commonly two years, immediately subsequent to graduation."\* The instruction, therefore, which might have been acquired in any school, preparatory to an application for graduation, was furnished in necessary abundance in the University towns; and thus the business of teaching fell naturally, in a great measure, under the regulation of those institutions themselves. At Oxford and Cambridge, from which American colleges have borrowed most of their peculiarities, a new feature was, in process of time, developed. Eleemosynary establishments, called colleges, were endowed for the support and residence of poor students; and boarding-houses, for those who were able to pay, arose in great numbers, under the name of halls. Each of these colleges and halls was made subject to the government of a resident master, who was assisted in his duties by one or more tutors. Since their origin, the character of these establishments has undergone great changes. At first, the proper business of the tutors was, mainly, to look after the conduct of the pupils, and enforce upon them habits

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\* Sir Wm. Hamilton's Discussions on Philosophy, &c.

of personal neatness; but, in the progress of the mutations which time has introduced, they have become almost exclusively the teachers of the under-graduates in all the studies required to fit them for the University examinations, which are to determine their title to a degree.

Since graduation in the English Universities depends strictly upon the results of examination, and not upon a record of a more or less faithful attention to a prescribed routine of daily study, it might appear that the student there should be subject to no control in regard to the order in which he may pursue his studies, or prepare himself for the final ordeal. But this is not so. It is a manifest necessity that, where trial is by examination, there should be some established *standard*, by which the attainments of each candidate may be tested. Such a standard can only be intelligible and definite when presented in the form of a prescribed series of books, of which the contents are to be perfectly mastered. This reduces the business of University instruction, which is in its intention, and which may be in fact, a teaching of *subjects of knowledge*, to the mere inculcation (for purposes of graduation) of the substance of certain special treatises of science or philosophy, and certain particular works of ancient and modern literature. Thus is established what is called the college curriculum of study.

As the original design for which the academic honor of graduation was instituted was to distinguish those

who had submitted to a thorough course of intellectual training, the subjects of examination, and consequently the curriculum of study, embraced from the beginning matters designed to exercise, in due and symmetrical proportion, all the faculties of the human mind. The seven liberal arts, as they were called, received this name because they were believed suitable to furnish this training. They were distinguished from the arts of handicraft—the mechanic arts—on the one hand, and from the arts of embellishment—the fine arts—on the other. They are fitted, in their several ways, to induce those intellectual habits without which nothing valuable can ever be accomplished in the world of mind; and to furnish that exercise which is as necessary to the development of mental as of physical vigor. The pursuit of mathematical studies is well fitted to induce habits of close and concentrated attention, and the power of following out a continuous and extended train of thought. The study of Language invigorates and strengthens the memory, leads to a facility in delicate discriminations, multiplies ideas, improves the power of expression, gives increased command of the instrument by which, mainly, mind influences mind, and suggests much material for that species of reasoning which rests on probable evidence, through the indications it furnishes of the affiliations of the races of man. The more systematic exercise of the reason is brought into play in the study of Dialectics. Here the learner becomes instructed how to apply the touchstone to



argument, to distinguish sound reasoning from sophistry, to arrange the materials of a discussion, and to present truths of inference in the most impressive form. Rhetoric cultivates at once many faculties. It stimulates the invention by demanding what considerations may be alleged in support of specific propositions; it disciplines the judgment by calling upon it continually to decide nice questions relating to the propriety of language; it cultivates the imagination by exercising that faculty in all the embellishments of figurative expression; and it trains and corrects the taste by employing it to control the exuberance of a fancy too apt, when unrestrained, to run into riotous extravagance. Natural Philosophy, in its various branches, furnishes numerous happy examples of reasoning from induction, or inferring truth from probable evidence. Moral Philosophy is a continuous and improving application of the principles of logic to questions which concern the conscience; and in its cultivation is calculated to render more acute the power of discrimination in matters of abstract truth, as well as to establish principles in place of feeling as the guide of action. And the Philosophy of Mind, the science of self-knowledge, the most important, perhaps, of all studies, considering its influence upon the subject, furnishes a discipline of the most superior order, as it opens up a world vast as that of matter and impalpable as the thinking essence itself. "Philosophy," says Sir William Hamilton, "the thinking of thought, the recoil of mind upon itself, is one of

the most improving of mental exercises, conducing, above all others, to evolve the highest and rarest of the intellectual powers. By this the mind is not only trained to philosophy proper, but prepared, in general, for powerful, easy, and successful energy, in whatever department of knowledge it may more peculiarly apply itself." Thus every study throughout the entire range of the liberal Arts and the Philosophies has its peculiar use and value in drawing into activity and cherishing into vigor the various powers and faculties of the human mind. When all are in due proportion combined in a system of intellectual training, the pupil emerges from the discipline with a mind well balanced, and equally fitted to grapple with whatever difficulty. Should he now direct his energies, as is usual with the majority of men, into one particular channel, he is in no danger of adding to the number of those characters so frequently met with, whose one-sided development renders them giants within the domain of their chosen profession, and pigmies without. On the other hand, though in his special pursuit he may attain eminence with much or with little labor, it will not be at the expense of disqualifying himself for intelligent intercourse with men of every other class. Let anyone look round him and silently count how very many, within the circle of his own personal acquaintance, are men merely of a profession or a class. How many are there, whose merits in their proper vocation are the theme of general admiration and praise, yet who are so little thought of as fit to

advise or suggest or lead in any enterprise out of this their peculiar and narrow range of action, that the merest hint at such a step, as likely to be volunteered on their part, is sufficient to excite a smile. It cannot, it will not, be maintained, even by those who most loudly demand that our universities shall be converted into schools for technical or professional education, that to be a merely technical or professional man is all to which a youth should aspire. It cannot be that even the most earnest of our educational reformers can fail to perceive how immensely higher, in the consideration of his fellow-citizens, stands the man who, whether his daily avocation be that of a merchant, or a physician, or a machinist, or a farmer, or a lawyer, or an iron-master, possesses a mind cultivated in all its faculties, and stored with a wide range of general knowledge, than he who, whatever may be his mastery of his particular pursuit, knows nothing beyond it. These men of universal cultivation and comprehensive knowledge, are the men to whom the less fortunate majority look for counsel and guidance in difficulties, for collected calmness in periods of excitement, for the scrutinizing examination of projects of innovation or improvement, for judicious opinions as to the results of measures of policy, in short for all those manifestations of intellectual superiority which secure to the thoroughly educated everywhere a position and an influence which nothing else can do. These thoroughly educated men will always be the comparatively few, as they always have been

since the world began; and the reason is, that the majority cannot for want of time and means, or will not for want of disposition, submit to the steady, long-continued, and even painful discipline which can alone entitle them to rank among the aristocracy of mind. To denounce our colleges, because, where hundreds of young men are growing up together, they only educate their tens, and to demand that their gates shall be thrown so widely open that all those hundreds may enter in, is neither just in the first instance nor wise in the second. For the fact that, out of the many who might be, but few are actually educated, is a fact which, however unfortunate it may appear, is attributable to nothing else but the unwillingness of the majority to submit to the intellectual regimen which the colleges prescribe. And the demand that some portions of this regimen shall be omitted, and that the stamp of scholarship, or the diploma which was originally designed to be the stamp of scholarship, shall be awarded for a less equivalent of labor rendered, can, if successful, have no effect but to degrade the distinction and bring the honor low, instead of lifting the graduate to the position in fact, which he will have thus secured in name.

It is, however, very commonly asserted by the advocates of revolutionary measures in our colleges, that they aim not to break down existing systems of education, if any prefer still to cling to them, so much as to superadd other and varied methods, partial or thorough, extended or brief, according to the option of the student, or of those who direct his course of training



Let the old curriculum stand, they say, for all who choose to follow it; but let not the college be so niggardly of the treasures of its learning, as to deny a portion to those whom misfortune or poverty, or advanced age will not permit to enjoy the whole. We object not—this is their profession—to any degree of severity or thoroughness, or to any extent of range which you may choose to prescribe to such as, bowing to your dictation, consent to submit to this oppression; but we demand that everybody shall be educated in his own way, thoroughly or partially, profoundly or superficially, just as he pleases.

Now, for the sake of argument, let us admit that, on the plan proposed, there may possibly be as many volunteers for a thorough course of instruction—the very course now prescribed—as there are at present; and therefore that the studies of this class may be sustained, without any variation from the present arrangements, no matter how widely the doors are thrown open to others. But, then, with only the present means and appliances of the college, what is to be done with these others? If they are introduced to the regular recitations and lectures of the thorough-course students, they are tied up in each department to the same invariable routine, compelled, willingly or unwillingly, to travel over the same extent of ground, chained down to the same unalterable rate of progress, against which we hear so frequent and so stout protest; and, in case they desire to pursue but a single branch of study, or but one or two, they find no remedy *in the system*

against the necessary waste of two-thirds or three-quarters of their time. They must, therefore, if properly instructed at all, constitute a body entirely, or in great measure, independent of the thorough-course students. But the reasons which require that their wants should be independently provided for, would also require that there should be independent provision for every limited group of them, whose choice of studies might happen to fall in a common direction, while it differed from that of the majority. Even in some instances, and in many, if this system of free choice of study should be carried out wherever it may lead, a single individual might require special provision for his separate instruction. Our universities, with their feeble means, might be expected to perform all that is attempted by those of Germany, with professors and teachers numbered by the score or by the hundred. "In the German Universities," says Dr. Manly, "which boast of a large circle of branches, and are eminently expensive establishments, professors are maintained who sometimes have classes of not more than two or three students (he might have said one, and often, for intervals of time, none), and this in a country where scholars are numbered by tens of thousands."

This view of the case divests of all its plausibility the proposition to transform our colleges into something new, in compliance with an imaginary popular demand. It proves that if the thing, for which it is affirmed that the popular voice is so decidedly pronounced, should be conceded as a reality, the result

would be substantially not to transform an old college, but to superadd to it a new one, or half-a-dozen new ones; the whole, indeed, in some degree lending each other natural aid, but each requiring, in the main, a separate and independent management. Now, even to this it would not be necessary to raise any very strenuous objection, if, along with the proposition to transform, it could be shown, either that the officers of the existing Faculties are able—and by this is simply meant, able physically—to endure the increased burthen of duties which the change would draw down upon them; or that the change itself would bring with it the means of so increasing the academic staff, as to make it equal to the vastly increased labor. It is evident, from what has already been said, that the first branch of this alternative cannot be maintained; and if it could, there is no reason to suppose that college officers, not usually extravagantly paid even for the services they now perform, would submit to a drudgery which would consume their entire time and waste their entire strength, while it condemned them, for absolute want of opportunity, to a complete cessation, on their own part, from all further intellectual progress. None will submit to a degradation like this, but such as have no desire or aptitude for further personal improvement,—none, therefore, whose names enrolled in the list of a Faculty could give to a college reputation, or awaken pride among its patrons and friends. As to the other branch of the alternative, the probability that the change would so improve the revenues of the institution, as to make it

practicable largely to increase the corps of instruction, two remarks may be made. If this probability amounts to a certainty, it would seem rather to call for the erection of a special institution, which, by the terms of the supposition, must be self-sustaining; and which, being untrammelled by the necessity of following, with a large portion of its students, a Procrustean course, must certainly accomplish its objects better than it could do while so encumbered. If, on the other hand, there is no certainty about it, if the chances are only equal, or if they are less than equal, that the revenue will keep pace with the necessary increase of expenditure, is it not wrong, is it not almost wicked, to expose institutions already doing good service in the cause of education, to the hazard of utter ruin, for the sake of instituting a more than doubtful experiment?

But perhaps it will be said that the University of Virginia, from which it is proposed to draw the plan of our remodeled system of instruction, has not a numerous body of instructors—has not, in fact, a larger number of officers in its Faculty of Arts than we have in ours. This fact is certainly undeniable; but this very fact proves that the arguments which are most confidently relied on in favor of change, are entirely baseless. It is said that we must introduce here the system of the University of Virginia, in order that every student may have the opportunity, in the words of Dr. Wayland, to study “what he chooses, all that he chooses, and nothing but what he chooses.” Yet this the undersigned have, as they believe, shown to be im-



possible, without that large number of teachers which confessedly the University of Virginia has not. And if we refer to the statement contained in the catalogue of that institution for the last collegiate year, we shall find that the Faculty, instead of making any pretence to provide for the varying wants of young men who wish to study "what they choose, and nothing but what they choose," merely arrange their students in classes—not the usual college classes, which are the same with every officer—but in classes which may be different in different departments, while in the same department they are constant throughout the course. It appears, from this authority, that the number of classes receiving instruction in each department is only in a few cases greater, but is quite as often less, in the University of Virginia, than in the University of Alabama. In illustration of this statement the following comparison may be made. It exhibits the number of classes simultaneously reciting similar subjects, in the two institutions.

	Univ. of Ala.	Univ. of Va.
Latin and its Literature, . . .	Four . .	Two.
Greek " " " . . .	Four . .	Two.
French, . . . . .	Three . .	Three.
Mathematics, pure, . . .	Two . .	Three.*
"    mixed, . . . .	Two . .	Three.
Geology, &c., . . . .	One . .	One.
Chemistry, . . . . .	One . .	One.
Ethics, &c. . . . .	Four . .	Three.
Total, . . . . .	Twenty-one.	Eighteen.

The Virginia University appears to offer no advan-

\* The department of pure mathematics in the University of Virginia has nominally four classes; but one of these is a class in mixed mathematics. The department of mixed mathematics proper has but two classes.

tage over our own, as it regards the freedom of the student within a given department to select his own studies, if we except a slight one in the departments which embrace the exact sciences. Supposing, therefore, that the ordinance of the Board of Trustees of this University, which was enacted in 1831, opening the institution to what were called "partial-course students," should be now again revived; it would require but very slight alterations in regard to the hours of lecture and recitation, and in regard to the number of classes in each department, to give to this college the plan of the University of Virginia complete. The language of the law referred to is the following, as printed by order of the Board in 1837. "The University shall be open to persons who do not desire to take the full course and to be graduated as Bachelors of Arts, but who desire to take a partial course and be graduated in particular departments only; provided they are found qualified for the studies of the department which they wish to join; and provided they take not less than the usual number of departments," &c., &c.

But it is certainly not this plan which we are told that the people demand. The promise held out, has been that the University, as reorganized, should give instruction to all who come here to demand it, should give them precisely what they demand, and should give it precisely when they demand it. Such, at least, is undoubtedly the popular understanding of the proposition made and widely published in regard to our University. If the call for change has assumed the definite

shape of a demand for the system of the University of Virginia, it is not because that system, as it exists there, is known to the people of Alabama in general, and by them approved; but because that name has been used to stand for the thing desired, and which, by the proposed reorganization, it is hoped to obtain. Expressly on this ground would the undersigned, under any circumstances, resist the alteration; for since the system called by this—for the moment perhaps popular—name is certainly not the thing which the people who are said to ask for change expect, it is folly to suppose that they will be satisfied with it after they come to see what it actually is. The thing which the people do really desire, if they desire any thing, is that which the undersigned have shown to be what it does not belong to this University to attempt to supply, on the ground that it either will not pay and is therefore impracticable and cannot but be ruinous, or that if it will pay, it has no need of the University.

The very small number of students of Arts furnished by Virginia to her own University, as has already been shown earlier in this Report, is evidence enough that the system has not the approbation of Virginians themselves. This fact will appear more unanswerably true, if we extend the comparison to other colleges, where the close system is severely carried out. The College of South Carolina, for instance, exhibits a list of 189 under-graduates for the collegiate year 1853-54, of whom 175 are furnished by the State of South Carolina itself. The total white population of the State,

according to the census of 1850, is 274,563 ; while that of Virginia, as already stated, is 894,800, furnishing only 163 students of Arts to the State University. If South Carolina patronized her college no better than Virginia does her University (the professional schools apart), she would send to Columbia but 50 students instead of 175. The South Carolina College is one of some standing in years. Let us take another, also maintaining rigidly the close system, which has been in operation only for a limited period—the University of Mississippi. The total number of students on the catalogue of this institution for the past year is 158, from which subtracting all but those whose residences are in the State, and who are pursuing the regular under-graduate course, we shall have 134, upon a population of 295,718. Yet if Mississippi were no more partial to the course of education in her University than Virginia seems to be to that which hers has adopted, she would furnish to it only 53 under-graduate students.

In the following table are presented the results of similar calculations for a number of colleges whose catalogues happen to be at hand. The dates are the latest accessible, and are all recent. In the first column are placed the number of under-graduates which each State would furnish to the college belonging to it, if it furnished the same number, in proportion to population, which Virginia furnishes to her University ; and in the second are placed the actual numbers present, as given in the several catalogues, excluding all from other States, and all who are not regular under-graduates:—



	Proportional Number.	Actual Number.
University of Va., . . .	163 .	163
University of Ala., . . .	77 .	107
S. C. College, . . .	50 .	175
University of Miss., . . .	53 .	134
University of Geo., . . .	95 .	107
University of N. C., . . .	100 .	139
Yale College, . . .	66 .	135
Harvard University, . . .	178 .	238
Dartmouth College, . . .	57 .	160

It appears to the undersigned that facts of this nature, and which admit of being multiplied to a much greater extent, combine to furnish an absolute demonstration that the system of instruction practiced at the University of Virginia is, for students not attending the professional schools, absolutely out of favor and unpopular where it is best known,—in the State of Virginia itself. It appears that not one single consideration exists to encourage the belief, that that system, transplanted here, would be any more favorite with the people of Alabama than it is in Virginia. It appears that, though the name has become a popular catchword among those who have urged the remodeling of our own State University, yet the reality which it represents is not at all that thing which it is evidently here supposed to be; and that its introduction with us could only lead to immediate disappointment, and ultimate dissatisfaction and disgust. If it should at first be successful in attracting to the University a material increase of numbers—and, considering how much has been promised of which the performance is impossible,

perhaps it might—it is quite hopeless to expect that its popularity would outlive the discovery of the hollowness of its pretensions.

The undersigned have thus far argued this question as if it were one of mere policy or interest—a question to be decided by the probable comparative popularity of different plans of organization. They have fully proved, at least in their own opinion, that, even considered from this humble point of view, the proposed change is inexpedient, as being full of danger, if not certain to end in disaster and ruin. But it is not here that the undersigned find those considerations, which ought first of all to demand the attention of a wise man planning a scheme of education, which is perhaps to give character to the intellectual training of a whole people, and to perpetuate its consequences, for good or for ill, to many succeeding generations. It will be a sad day for the cause of sound education, if it shall ever happen that our institutions of learning shall be found watching the fluctuations of a too usually uninformed popular opinion, and endeavoring to adapt themselves to its incessant changes. The will of the people, in regard to the management of all public interests, must of course ultimately prevail; but the true will of the people can never be known until the people themselves are fully informed. There are some subjects which to present superficially is almost of necessity to present erroneously; since it is true of them, as of many things in material nature, that the color of the surface is entirely the reverse of what

appears beneath. To talk of the organization and appropriate functions of colleges to those whose personal observation has never extended beyond the common school or the academy, is almost necessarily to awaken unfounded impressions, unless much greater explicitness of statement and copiousness of explanation is employed, than it is always, or even generally, easy to give. Therefore is it, that to appeal on these subjects to the popular judgment—by which is meant the judgment of the whole mass of the people—is, as a general rule, injudicious ; since, while nothing is on the one hand more easy than to unsettle confidence in the existing order of things, nothing is more difficult on the other than to make the whole subject so universally clear as, if evils exist, to insure their wise correction, or, if they do not, to re-establish again the confidence which has once been shaken.

It is, on this account, in the opinion of the undersigned, much to be lamented, that the question of the proposed re-organization of this University has been made a subject of general discussion, instead of being considered and disposed of by the Board of Trustees exclusively. It is not in their power to say that dissatisfaction has not thus been awakened in quarters where it did not exist before. It seems to them, indeed, hardly possible that some such effect should not have been produced ; but so far from believing it to be their duty, in case of the appearance of any indications of this sort, to give way to the inconsiderate demands of a popular clamor, or to abandon the cause

of which their official position renders them, in their own view, the bounden defenders, they would believe rather that it belonged to them to put forth every exertion of which they are capable, to enlighten and correct and modify the public sentiment itself. And if, after thus washing their own hands clean of all participation in the sacrilege, they should yet be compelled to witness the consummation of the threatened ruin, they would prefer still to contend single-handed against the destroyers, rather than join in the destruction; and, if it must come to that at length, to die in the last ditch.

Discarding, therefore, the question, will the proposed system be popular or not—will it bring great accessions of numbers or not—as being one of but subordinate importance, the undersigned protest against the system on the ground that its introduction would be a practical treason against the cause of sound education in Alabama, and against the interests of the great republic of letters everywhere. It would be to offer a direct encouragement and reward to the desertion of that round of thorough and varied mental discipline, which the scholars of all time have pronounced to be absolutely necessary to make a scholar. It is to place the partially, or the superficially, or even the partially and superficially educated man (for it will come to that at last), practically on a par, so far as college sanctions go, with the profound and thorough—to prostitute the people's mint to the manufacture of base counterfeits, and give to worthless brass the stamp of gold. For



the popular demand of which we hear so often, and to which we are reminded that we must yield if we would not be swept away by it, is not, after all, a demand so much for the opportunity and permission to learn, as for the attainment of a deceptive seeming to have learned. It is not so much a claim for admission to the schools, as for the diplomas which the schools have it in their power to award. Nothing could put this assertion more completely beyond all question than the fact that the outcry is never for the erection of independent schools, which, if the demand is real and is for real knowledge, would of course be crowded and could not but be profitable; and which would have the great additional advantage, that being erected to meet a distinctly announced want, could be modeled on precisely the plan best adapted to satisfy the impatient public; but is invariably for the transformation of a college into some novel shape, for the breaking up of its settled system of education, for the rejection of this study as antiquated and that study as useless, and, in short, for a Jack-Cadelike turning of the coat of the commonwealth of letters, and setting an entirely new nap on it. And if we compare with each other those institutions in the country which have endeavored to accommodate themselves to this asserted popular demand, we shall find that, as a general rule, when they have offered simply the knowledge without the diploma, the boon has been regarded with contemptuous indifference; but that when they have offered the diploma at the same time, they have sometimes secured

a respectable attendance. Yet even in this case, there has been no example of a throng like what has been anticipated here, attracted by the concession. If, in describing the attendance, it is allowable even to use the word respectable, as above, it certainly would not be allowable to use a stronger word.

As an example of a college offering the knowledge without the diploma—permitting students, in other words, the same latitude of choice which is granted in the University of Virginia, but withholding from them the honor of graduation—may be instanced the University of Georgia. The latest catalogue of this institution which happens to be at hand (that of 1848–9), gives the total number of its students for the year at 140. The number of partial course, or “University” students, is not stated; but in Dr. Manly’s report (1852) a statement is given from one of the professors, which puts the average number at only *four* or *five*. President Church, in a recent letter, speaking of the system, says, “The result has been any thing but favorable. Occasionally a student of this class has been clever and has done well; but most have not been much benefited—and in many instances I think they have been injured.” Dr. Church proceeds to add—and it will be noticed how completely the remark corroborates the position which the undersigned have been endeavoring to maintain: “The friends, however, of the Virginia system, I apprehend, will say that our partial course is very different from their system; that it takes away the stimulus to effort by making the irregular student an

inferior order, and *depriving him of all expectation of college honors*. And this is doubtless true." Yes, it is true—it is the desire for the stamp, and not for the knowledge which the college has in its power to bestow, which only can draw students of this class to such an institution, or make them diligent after it has attracted them.

A similar illustration may be found in the University of Rochester. In this institution there are two distinct courses of study on the principle of the close system; one called the Classical, and the other the Scientific. They differ mainly in the respect that the latter course substitutes the modern instead of the ancient languages throughout the entire period of instruction. The plan is also so arranged, that the student may pass from the classical to the scientific course, if he pleases, at the end of the Sophomore year, without prejudice to his standing. But, besides this, it is permitted to students to select their own departments at pleasure, as in the Virginia University, but without admitting them at the end, like the others, to a degree. The catalogue of this University for 1853–4, shows, out of a total of one hundred and eighteen under-graduates, only *eleven* of this class, of whom only *four* have advanced beyond a single year.

Union College, in the same State, may serve as example of the influence which the hope of obtaining a degree exerts to enlist recruits in this sort of educational guerilla regiment. This College offers, like the Rochester University, the scientific and the classical courses

above described; and it also offers, like the same again, but with the offer of a degree besides, the full freedom to select a course at pleasure, which is the distinguishing characteristic of the Virginia University. In the catalogue of this institution, for the third term of 1854, we find a total of 241 under-graduates, and out of them, the large number of 57 are "University students." The number, we say, is large; and it is so when we compare it with the insignificant exhibit of the Rochester or the Georgia University; yet, after all, it is remarkably a minority in the grand total of Union College itself. Now, if this "open system" is more popular than the other, the fact ought to manifest itself in the colleges which professedly furnish both and crown those who follow them with equal honor, by showing the balance of numbers correspondingly in its favor; but this is a thing which never happens.

The University of Virginia itself, prosperous as at the first view of its catalogue it seems, enjoys but a very moderate prosperity in its Faculty of Arts. Were it as well supported by the people of Virginia as the College of South Carolina is supported by the citizens of that State, instead of 163 Virginia youth under this Faculty, it would have 632.

The result of these comparisons is, in the view of the undersigned, conclusive of the fact which they set out to prove, viz. that the demand for an "open" system of instruction in colleges, proceeds not, as is asserted, from a genuine desire for special or partial instruction, but simply and solely from the ambition to obtain



the college stamp of scholarship, without submitting to that systematic and severe intellectual training which only can make the scholar. And it also incidentally proves, that there is in the mass of the community, after all, too much good sense, and too true a discrimination between pretense and reality, between the tinsel and the gold, to accept, as a general rule, the dispensation when it is offered; but that, in contempt of all the seducing railways to graduation which compliant Universities have seen fit to construct, the great majority still press stoutly on in the difficult but well-beaten path which their fathers trod before them, confident that their well-developed muscles and vigorous limbs will lend them, at the end of the course, an infinite superiority over those who land from the cars with scarcely the consciousness of having put forth an exertion by the way.

The undersigned are further confirmed in the conviction they have expressed as to the true object and motive of the demand for "open" systems, by the nature of the objections so continually raised against the usual curriculum of collegiate study. These objections are invariably founded on the assumed want of practical usefulness of the classics and of the higher mathematics. "It is objected that mathematical knowledge, to most students, is of little practical use. The plain rules of arithmetic, it is said, are all which most men ever find occasion to apply. \* \* \* Why, it is asked, should a student be compelled to devote years to the acquisition of a species of knowledge which is

useful only as it enables him to advance to the study of navigation, surveying, astronomy, and other sciences into which mathematical principles largely enter; when he has no wish or expectation to engage practically in either of these sciences; and will probably, from his distaste for the whole subject, forget in a few years what he has learned with so much labor?" This is the form in which the objection to the mathematics is stated in the reply of the Faculty of Yale College to a resolution of the President and Fellows of that institution, passed in 1827, inquiring into the expediency of remodeling the plan of instruction in operation there. And in this form we continually hear it reiterated by those who, among the people, complain of the severity or the practical inutility of the plan of instruction here. What is the *man* to do—that is the perpetually recurring question—with the abstract mathematics with which you weary the youth? Will the theory of functions make him a better lawyer, or the calculus a better theologian, or analytic geometry a better merchant, than he would be without them? The objector utterly ignores any other species of benefit derivable from the study, but that which appears in the direct and visible application of the knowledge acquired to the immediate business of life. Even upon this ground, it is not difficult to meet and to answer him. Though he may not himself have occasion to employ in practice all the science in which he is instructed, yet he cannot avoid coming in contact with men whose business it is to make such applications. Is it of no importance to him

to be able to judge of men as well as of matter? Will it be of no value to him to be conscious of some power to read and duly estimate the attainments of those on whose professional opinions he may perhaps, at one time or another, be called upon to stake all that he possesses? "Granting," say the Yale College Faculty, in the reply above quoted, "that he loses from his memory many or most of the details of the sciences, he still knows where to apply for information, and how to direct his inquiries; and is able to judge correctly of the talents and pretensions of those who are prominent in any one department, and whom he may wish to employ in the accomplishment of actual business. He is acquainted in the region where he is, acts more understandingly in what he undertakes, and is found, in consequence of his knowledge, to be, in all his transactions, a more practical man."

But what if he were not? The undersigned desire to rely on no such line of argumentation as this. What if he does lose from his memory all the details of mathematical science he ever knew, above the mere arithmetic of every day? It is undeniable, and no sound reasoner on the philosophy of education ever denied, that the study of these details, if it has been diligently and not too exclusively pursued, has left behind it an effect of inappreciable value. No study can compare with that of the mathematics, in creating and fixing habits of close and concentrated attention, and of following out connected and long-continued trains of thought. Yet, without habits of this kind, what may seem to be natural gifts of the most brilliant character, may, and

will fail inevitably to produce any valuable results ; since in mind, as surely as in matter, it is labor only which builds the pyramids. Even Sir William Hamilton, in his able and in most respects, it must be confessed, just strictures upon the excessive employment of mathematical study, as an instrument of mental training, is compelled to confess its usefulness in this particular. "The study," he says, "if pursued in moderation, may be beneficial in the correction of a certain vice, and in the formation of its corresponding virtue. The vice is the habit of mental distraction ; the virtue, the habit of continuous attention." And though he maintains that "mathematics are not the only study which cultivates the attention, neither is the kind and degree of attention which they tend to induce the kind and degree of attention which our other and higher speculations require and exercise ;" and though he quotes, with his assent, the observation of Kirwan, that "there is no science which does not equally require it,"—still the experience and testimony of ages must be regarded in these particulars as an offset to his high authority ; and it must be admitted as incontestibly established, that the mathematics are the most powerful of all known instruments for training the mind to habits of undivided attention. And so long as without the power of attention, no other faculties of the mind are controllable by their possessor so as to be available for any valuable end ; it is to no purpose to sneer at this, as being in the humblest rank of mental powers, in order to bring into disrepute the studies by which it is most efficiently cultivated.



To those, therefore, who cry out for the omission of mathematical studies from the college curriculum, or for a system so conveniently open that they may be able to omit them for themselves, the undersigned would reply that the omission destroys one of the most important of the guaranties hitherto regarded as indispensable, that the course of study shall produce the result, which the University, by its diploma, is to certify to have been produced—symmetrical mental training and sound scholarship.

But if the mathematics, and especially the higher mathematics of the college course, have been subjects of attack, the ancient classics have been no less so. "It is often asked," says President Sparks, in his inaugural address, "Why waste so much time in studying the dead languages, in acquiring Greek and Latin, which are seldom used afterwards? Why not fill up this long period with studies of *more immediate utility*, which, at the same time that they help to train the mind and form the character, communicate a knowledge of men and things, *which may be turned to account in the common affairs of life?*" In the same spirit, an anonymous English writer, in a vigorous onslaught upon classical learning, published in 1850, and considered of importance enough to be made the subject of an article in one of the leading British reviews, inquires, "Is the mere classical scholar as well fitted as persons trained in other ways, for doing the things which need be done in such times as those in which we are living? Do we find that this is the best training, in an active and jostling and

stirring age like the present, for the senate, the bar, the platform, or the press? Can the mere scholar *sway the minds of the men of Manchester or of Birmingham?*" Without stopping to remark that the men who leave the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and who are here signalized as "mere scholars," have, for the most part, swayed the minds of the men of Manchester and of Birmingham, down to the present day, it is sufficient to observe that in these extracts and many other similar ones which might be quoted, we have still the idea standing prominently out, that the college curriculum *ought* to furnish "knowledge which may be turned to account in the common affairs of life;" and that the course of undergraduate training *ought* to be conducted with the view to turn out youth immediately fit "to sway the minds of the men of Manchester and of Birmingham." The perpetual recurrence of this idea in all the writings of all the modern advocates of new systems of collegiate instruction, is truly disheartening. The apparent absence of any just apprehension of what it is which a college, in its intention, undertakes to do, or of any sort of appreciation of the value of the object at which the college aims, make it necessary continually to fall back upon first principles, and to fritter away time and waste breath in endless explanations. The true philosophy of this subject is found so well expressed in the following passage from the able letter of President Thornwell of the S. S. College, to Gov. Manning of that State, that the undersigned believe they cannot do better than to adopt it. "The selection of studies

must be made, not with reference to the comparative importance of their matter, or the practical value of the knowledge, but with reference to their influence in unfolding and strengthening the powers of the mind; *as the end is to improve mind, the fitness for the end is the prime consideration.* 'As knowledge,' says Sir William Hamilton, '(man being now considered as an end to himself) is only valuable as it exercises, developes, and invigorates the mind, so a university, in its liberal faculty, should especially prefer those objects of study which call forth the strongest and most unexclusive energy of thought, and so teach them, too, that this energy shall be most fully elicited in the student. For speculative knowledge, of whatever kind, is only profitable to the student, in his liberal cultivation, inasmuch as it supplies him with the object and occasion of exerting his faculties; since powers are only developed in proportion as they are exercised, that is, put forth into energy. The mere possession of scientific truths is, for its own sake, valueless; and education is only education inasmuch as it at once determines and enables the student to educate himself.' *Hence, the introduction of studies on the ground of their practical utility is, pro tanto, subversive of the college.* It is not its office to make planters, mechanics, lawyers, physicians, or divines. *It has nothing directly to do with the uses of knowledge.* Its business is with minds, and it employs science only as an instrument for the improvement and perfection of mind. With it, *the habit of sound thinking is more than a thousand thoughts.* When, therefore, the question is asked,

as it often is asked, by ignorance and empiricism, *what is the use of certain departments of the college curriculum, the answer should turn not upon the benefits which, in after life, may be reaped from these pursuits, but upon their immediate subjective influence upon the cultivation of the human faculties.*"

Now, considered as an instrument of intellectual discipline, the study of language has, from the earliest times been regarded as inestimably valuable. Man cannot think but in signs, and the signs of his thoughts are words. But words in their connection combine themselves according to laws, which laws inhere deeply in the nature of things, and closely connect themselves with the philosophy of the mind. It is not true, as is often asserted, that the study of language is the mere acquisition of a nomenclature, or the substitution of one nomenclature for another—a weary exercise of the memory alone, with a lexicon for a text book. So far otherwise is the fact, that there is no more improving exercise of the judgment, no better sharpener of the perception of nice distinctions, no more facile guide to the power of easy abstraction, and certainly no more rapid and efficient help to correctness, copiousness, and force of expression, than the critical study of language. If, in some of these respects, it ranks below that of metaphysics, rhetoric, or logic, in others it stands above them; and if the discipline which it furnishes is less severe, it is on that account the more desirable to retain it, as it furnishes the happiest preparation for that more trying regimen which they introduce.



But if the study of language generally has the value which is here claimed for it, that of the languages of ancient Rome and Greece possesses this merit in an eminent degree. In them those principles of the philosophy of speech, to which allusion has been made, and which constitute in their systematized form the science of General Grammar, are more perfectly and more happily illustrated, than in any other known tongues, living or dead. And not only is it true that, as languages, they thus furnish to the linguistic philosopher the most interesting, as they do at the same time to the youthful student the most improving, of all the subjects embraced in this department of knowledge; but also, it most fortunately happens, that their literature presents the happiest examples of language in its proper use—the most unexceptionable models of historical, dramatic, poetical, metaphysical, and oratorical composition, that the world has ever seen. We have, then, in the Greek and Roman tongues, the instrument of human thought in its most perfect form; and in the Greek and Roman classic authors, the application and the uses of the instrument in their most admirable and elegant illustrations. So strongly have these considerations impressed the educators—it may almost be said universally—of all modern time, that the perpetually recurring cry of the “practical men” of the entire century which precedes us—*Cui bono?* what will all this Latin and Greek do for us in the business of spinning cotton and raising potatoes?—has been of no avail whatever to dislodge the classics from our colleges, or even to unsettle the

firmness of the tenure by which they maintain their prescriptive prominence there. In view of these considerations, how empty and shallow does all this revolutionary clamor appear! And of how utterly trivial importance is it, whether the student who has experienced the inestimable benefits which spring from a thorough study of the "Humane Letters," remembers, or fails to remember, through all his after life, the mere facts of knowledge, which, as necessary incidentals to this training, he picked up during his student career! To an objection of this kind—and it is one of no unfrequent occurrence—may be replied, in the felicitous language of one of our own alumni, himself an honor to the system of training hitherto pursued in the University of Alabama: \* "Forgotten your Latin and Greek! Well, and what if you have? Who expects you to retain, *as man*, all the 'knowledges' that you learned, *as boy*? But the discipline and refinement which those noble models of thought and style imparted, you cannot have lost. You cannot have lost that delicacy of perception, that exactness of reasoning, that distinctness of moral truth, that elegance and purity of expression, which the classics invariably bestow upon their faithful votaries. It is impossible to sit down to a symposium with the gods, and rise up wholly mortal. Like Moses descending from the Mount, you will bear, impressed upon your front, *some* of the traces of Divinity."

But it is only the very unlettered, or the very weak, who indulge in this utter depreciation of the value of

\* W. C. L. Richardson, Esq., of Camden, Alabama.

classical study. There have certainly been learned and good men, who, induced by the occasional earnestness of the demand for more practical education for practical men, have consented to lend their aid toward meeting this demand. A number of the colleges of the country have presented to the applicants for admission, a choice between two courses of study—one of them that which is common in the colleges of the United States, and the other distinguished from this mainly in the exclusion of the Greek and Roman classics from the curriculum. The fact, however, that they retain these studies in either course, sufficiently demonstrates the sense they entertain of their value; a sense which, in some instances in which the opportunity has naturally arisen, they have not hesitated to express. An illustration of this remark occurs in a report presented to the Board of Trustees of the University of Rochester, by a committee of their body, in the year 1850, on the subject of the plan of instruction to be pursued in the collegiate department there. The plan recommended by the committee, in this report, which was subsequently adopted and which is now in operation, embraced the parallel “classical” and “scientific” courses described above; yet the committee, in speaking of the classics, use the following language: “They,” the committee, “have no desire of detracting from the value of classical studies, and much less have they any disposition to go over the old argument upon the subject. They are *unanimously* of opinion that the critical and extended study of the languages of ancient Greece and Rome—

languages which, though no longer spoken in their original forms, are still upon the lips of many nations, and live again in several of the tongues of modern Europe, constituting an important part of our vocabulary, and affording, in the exercise of translation, a discipline of incomparable excellence in the discriminating use of words, and in all the niceties of construction; languages so copious in resources and admirable in structure, so pure in the style of the authors, and rich in a literature that can boast of the highest models of eloquence and the best specimens of poetry in all its varieties; that contains the fountains of philosophy, and is replete with the spirit of ancient civilization; that is stored with glorious examples of patriotism and heroic virtue, and adorned with the gay pictures of an imaginative mythology—is one of the most valuable as it is the most elegant of studies, to those who aim at distinguished scholarship and will devote the requisite time to their education.”

In like manner, President Quincy, of Harvard, in a communication to the Board of Overseers of that institution, published in 1841, and prepared in advocacy of a plan by which it was proposed to permit an entire abandonment of the classics, at the pleasure of the student, after the completion of the freshman year, bears testimony to the great value of the studies which, in obedience to an imaginary popular requisition, he consents to see discarded. “That there are advantages in the study of the ancient languages—that they are better adapted than most other studies, to inure stu-



dents to overcome intellectual difficulties, and secure a habit of solid and vigorous application at an early period of life—that these languages are mixed, etymologically, with all the languages of modern Europe, and with none more than our own—that, as mere inventions, as pieces of mechanism, they are more beautiful than any of the modern languages—that the works they contain have longest stood the test of time, and pleased the greatest number of exercised minds—are reasons *why they should be made the groundwork of the early training of all who aim at the distinction of a liberal education*; and this, on the proposed system, will be effected at the schools, and in the first year in college.” And, in connection with this testimony, it may here be remarked that “the proposed system,” after a fair trial at Harvard, proved an entire failure. During the presidency of Hon. Edward Everett, the liberty of election between studies, or, in other words, the freedom to abandon the classics, was materially restricted; and that gentleman himself, as the undersigned state on the authority of a private letter received from him, was in favor of returning entirely to a prescribed course of study.

But while thus the value of classical study, in the subjective influence it exercises upon the student, is vindicated not only by a consideration of the nature of the study itself, but also by the testimony of judicious educators everywhere, even of those who have consented to its optional banishment from the college curriculum, it is not difficult, after all, to disprove the assertion so fre-

quently and so flippantly made, that the knowledge which this species of study furnishes to the youth, is without any practical use in later life. And here, in employing the words, practical use, the undersigned would not be understood to intend a use so intensely and literally and materially practical, as to manifest itself in superiority of skill in planting cotton, or unusual wisdom in managing stock; for if a test so gross is to be applied to the attainments of the scholar in every department, many other branches of learning beside the ancient classics will fall under the ban. But if propriety of speech, ease and copiousness of expression, and those various graces of conversation which distinguish the man of letters, may be regarded as practical benefits to their possessor, if the greater respect which they enable him to command from his surrounding fellow-men is a tribute worth receiving, if the substantial addition to his influence over others, and to his power of benefiting mankind which they bestow, be not a thing to be despised, then will the man in whose youthful culture the ancient classics have not been overlooked, carry with him to the latest day of his life, advantages derived from their study, which no sordid computation of dollars and cents can ever adequately represent.

The practical usefulness of the learned languages is also proved, by the extreme facility with which to one familiar with them, the languages of modern Europe may be acquired. It is believed that, with the opponents of classical study, the utility of a knowledge of modern languages has never been questioned—or rather

that this utility has always been a cardinal point of their creed. Now, since all the languages of southern Europe, are directly founded on the Latin, and the Latin itself is much dependent on and beautifully illustrated by the Greek, the acquisition of these latter is substantially an acquisition of all the rest. Whoever has, after a tolerable acquaintance with the ancient tongues, addressed himself to the task of acquiring the French, or the Spanish, or the Italian, or all of these languages, must have been delighted with the extreme facility with which he has found himself able to master them. Nor is this entirely owing, though it may be so in great measure, to the affiliation of all these offshoots from a common linguistic origin; but there is something in the thorough study of a language which approaches so nearly as the Latin, or the Greek, to theoretic perfection, which gives a power of mastery over all other tongues not obtainable by any other species of preparation. The following passage from Dr. Wayland's interesting work on the present collegiate system of the United States, happily illustrates this proposition. "A few years since," says Dr. Wayland, "I had the pleasure of meeting one of the most learned German scholars who has visited this country. I asked him how it was that his countrymen were able, at so early an age, to obtain the mastery of so many languages. He replied, I began the study of Latin at an early age. Every book I studied, I was made thoroughly acquainted with. I was taught to read and to re-read, translate forwards and backwards, trace out every word and know every

thing about it. Before I left a book, it became as familiar to me as if written in German. *After this, I had never any difficulty with any other language.*"\*

And on this point, it may finally be added, that, in the present state of the world's literature, some familiarity with the classic authors of Greece and Rome is, to any man who aspires to the name of a scholar, simply a necessity. The literature of all modern Europe is inextricably interwoven with that of Greece and Rome—our own no less than every other. We cannot be literary men, and yet be ignorant of the classics. The idea is utterly preposterous; and all the attempts to decry the ancient learning by representing it as so much "learned lumber," and thus endeavoring to bring it into disrepute, will have no other effect than to awaken the suspicion or establish the certainty that their originators are no better scholars than they should be, themselves.

Is it possible, then, that the Trustees of this University will deliberately resolve to award the honor of graduation, to confer the diploma which, from the earliest history of colleges, has been recognized only as the certificate of genuine scholarship, upon men who willfully neglect that which always has been, and inevitably always must be, the first essential to the scholar? Is it possible that they will do this ruinous thing, at a time when the University is in the enjoyment of a sound and healthy prosperity, such as it never has experienced before; and such as, to all who have been familiar with

\* Wayland on the American College System.



the early history of other colleges, is not only satisfactory but highly encouraging? Is it possible that they will do it, with the evidence before them of an entirely tranquil contentment pervading the whole people, in regard to the system of instruction in operation here; and in view of the fact that the proposition for a change, published everywhere throughout the State, has awakened only an occasional and feeble response; while it has at the same time elicited from the scattered friends of sound education so numerous and elaborate and able vindications of the existing order of things, as to prove beyond all question that the sound sense of the people is satisfied with what we have, and asks for nothing better? Is it possible that they will do this, and in doing so substitute in place of a tried and approved system, one which has not even the guaranty of past success to recommend it; but which is actually, in spite of all impressions heretofore existing to the contrary, unpopular at home, and which has, in point of fact, already broken down in every other institution which has attempted to borrow it? Surely this cannot be.

That it has so broken down, witness the statements of Dr. Manly's very able and comprehensive report, already repeatedly referred to. It there appears that, in the State of Virginia itself, two other colleges made the attempt, more than twenty years ago, to introduce the system of the State University. Of Washington College, Dr. Manly says, that "possessing an ample endowment, it had no object in the change but to *increase*

*the number of students*, and render itself more extensively useful to the citizens of the State." It appears that, in this institution, the attempt was made, really and in good faith, to accommodate the instruction to the varying demands of learners, and so permit each student to "study what he chose, all that he chose, and nothing but what he chose" (a respect in which we have seen that, whatever the University of Virginia may promise, or whatever its admirers may promise for its system here, it actually makes no effort to fulfill expectation); for Dr. Manly remarks that the college was soon overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task it had assumed, "it soon found that, on the new plan, its accustomed work had swelled into an intolerable burthen. With the same number of officers as before, and *no great increase of students*, the voluntary plan had so multiplied sections and subdivisions of students as to impose on some of the officers the necessity of hearing recitations incessantly, from morning till night. These small squads, having no definite amount of labor to perform in a given time, and *wanting the stimulus of numbers* (a serious want), dragged heavily through their work." It is hardly necessary to say, that after a trial of three or four years, an experiment so full of discouragement was entirely abandoned, and that "every thing was restored to its original organization."

The other example in Virginia, cited by Dr. Manly, was that of Randolph Macon College, in 1832. Of the "department method of organization," or that of the University of Virginia, here introduced, Dr. Manly ob-

serves, "*As it had a popular aspect*, the officers, when elected men of experience, entered on its administration with an honest purpose, and with the zeal belonging to a new denominational enterprise—a fresh and specious experiment. *Before the end of two years, their affairs had run into great confusion.*"

It is true that Dr. Manly says of these examples, that "remedies might have been found for a portion of the evils which had developed themselves;" by which the undersigned presume it to be meant that the students in each department might have been forced to conform to a manageable system of classification, or retire; that, in other words, while they continued to be permitted to elect their departments, they might have been deprived of any liberty of election *within the departments themselves*—a state of things which is believed actually to exist in the University of Virginia; but it is evident that the officers of these two colleges did not regard such an arrangement as an honest fulfillment of the promise which they had held out to the public, and therefore they applied no such remedy. It appears that in the institution last spoken of, "the more popular departments were obliged to distribute themselves into four classes, involving quadruple labor to the officers—and with results to each of these minor classes far from satisfactory. As subjects were taken up out of course, and advancements were unequal, students were becoming ready for graduation at different periods; and had the college followed out the unrestrained spon-

taneity of the system, they might have been asked to graduate a fragment every month."

Dr. Manly also cites the unsatisfactory results attained in a similar experiment at Geneva College, New York, in an experiment commenced about 1826. "Few," he says, "entered the classes on that [the open university] plan, who did not either retire or go into the regular course."

The experiment in our own University of Alabama, tried for about six years, between 1831 and 1837, may also be fairly cited in connection with the foregoing. It differed from the plan of the University of Virginia in very little, beside withholding the full degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts from the students of the voluntary course; while, like that, it proposed to graduate them in the several departments separately. But no attempt was made here to accommodate instruction to the varieties of preparation of the students offering, by subdividing the classes; and this preparation was evidently in many cases very meager. The consequence was, the great degradation of the standard of attainment, and the growth of habits of idleness and vice, which terminated at last in uncontrollable insubordination. Of this experiment, the Faculty of the University, in the letter addressed to the Hon. W. K. Baylor, quoted earlier in the Report, speak as follows: "Did it [the voluntary system], while increasing the number of the students, elevate the character of the college, or promote its prosperity, or enlarge the sphere of its usefulness? The reverse of all this is notoriously true.



Day by day, the standard of attainment in this college sunk lower and lower. Hour by hour disaffection grew, among students occupied but a portion of their time, and left for the rest to that idleness which, with the young and inexperienced, is but another name for incipient vice. The disasters which early befell this institution, were certainly in a measure chargeable upon its officers; but we must not forget that, at the same time, they were in a measure attributable to the system which those officers were compelled to carry out."

About the time of the publication of Dr. Manly's report, it was understood that a new university, on the entirely open plan, was going into operation at Cleveland, Ohio. Upon the appointment of this committee, the undersigned lost no time in addressing a letter to the president of that institution, soliciting information in regard to its success; but up to the date of this Report, they regret to say that they have received no reply."\*

If the entirely open university system has thus resulted in miserable failure wherever it has been tried, it has fared scarcely better with those schemes for the sys-

\* Since the above was written, a letter received from President Mahan states that, owing to some unfortunate litigation, the operations of the university were suspended about a year after the opening; and that they have not yet been resumed, though they probably will be so in a few weeks. The results, so far as they went, appear to have encouraged the friends of the institution, and to have given them confidence in their plan. The conclusion of the letter is in these words: "For the reasons stated above, however, you will readily perceive that we cannot speak from extended experience; and this is the only form of experience on which safe reliance, aside from the considerations of the laws of mind and the wants of the age, can be placed."

tematic proscription of classical studies provided in what are called the "scientific courses" of several of our colleges. Such courses are offered at Union College, and at the Rochester University, New York, and at Brown University, Rhode Island. Such a course, after the freshman year, was also, some years since, offered at Harvard, Mass. The result at Harvard has already been stated, by anticipation. Nothing remains of the scientific course there but a restricted liberty of election of certain branches of the mathematics, in place of either ancient or modern languages, during the junior and senior years. The catalogue of the Rochester University does not distinguish to which of the courses individual students belong, nor give the totals in each; but an interesting letter from Prof. Dewey, of that institution, himself strongly in favor of the plan in operation there, and one of its originators, furnishes evidence that the scientific course has not yet secured any very firm hold upon the public confidence or approbation. "The two courses, classical and scientific," writes Prof. Dewey, "which you will see in the catalogue, you know are not new. Union College and some others have adopted similar plans, and find, I believe, the same difficulty in the execution. *We* cannot keep any number in the scientific course. I did suppose that many, who did not wish Latin and Greek, would avail themselves of this course. Some have done so, but only a few; and many of those entering on it have afterwards taken Latin and Greek, and fitted themselves for the classical. So far as we have had scholars in the scientific, the plan has operated well.

Now we have only very few, not enough to make much effort necessary. *The power of public opinion in favor of the learned languages, and of the usual college course*, entirely controls our youth ; and I am pained to see, what I did not expect, the scientific course without many applicants, and even with very few. This is the result *here*." Yet certainly it has been under the pressure of a presumed force of public opinion in derogation of the learned languages, and in opposition to the usual college course, that these new systems of collegiate study have been originated ; and the fact that the public will not, after all, patronize them when presented, is a satisfactory demonstration that public opinion on this subject has been misapprehended.

Union College, in its catalogue for the third term, 1854, has a total of two hundred and forty-one students, of whom nineteen only are in the scientific course. In the freshman class, not a single individual belongs to that course ; and in the junior class, there are only two.

In regard to Brown University, the undersigned have no later information than that furnished by the report of Dr. Manly. Although, directly after their appointment, they addressed Dr. Wayland, soliciting from him some statement as to how far his anticipations had been realized in the subsequent actual working of his system, they have not yet been so fortunate as to receive his reply. In this, and in several other instances, in which their inquiries remain equally unanswered, it is probable that the unfavorable season of the year in which they were made, while most of the colleges of the country

are resting from their labors, and their officers are probably dispersed, has prevented their letters from seasonably reaching their destination.\* According to the report of Dr. Manly, out of the total number of students in the first term of 1852-3, there were forty-five per cent. studying Latin, and twenty-seven per cent. studying Greek. In order to understand the significance of these numbers, it must be observed that the catalogue embraces students of one, two, three, and four years' standing, while the courses of Latin and Greek study cover only *two* years. In the fourth year, the ancient

\* The commencement at Brown University was this year holden on the 6th of September, inst. According to the published reports, the degree of Master of Arts was conferred on twenty-three young men; that of Bachelor of Arts on eight; and that of Bachelor of Philosophy on seven—the first being a four years' course, and the other two being each courses of three years. The total number of graduates is, therefore, this year, only thirty-eight, of whom twenty-three take the classics in full; eight take them in full or in part; and only seven not at all. The suffrage at Brown University is, therefore, more than four to one in favor of classical learning. Yet this college makes the experiment under circumstances of advantage thus signalized by Dr. Manly in his report: "How much is peculiar here! The reputation and energy of the distinguished president; the enterprising character of the population of New England; and the degree to which the results of science are immediately wanted in the new and varied employments actually going on around; the fact, too, that it is the only institution already possessed of age and standing which has adopted these new and promising features;—all together, have given that institution an increase of numbers which no other sphere and no other circumstances could supply. In a densely peopled region, already educated above the average, eagerly pressing on the means of subsistence, of accumulation, or of fame, quickened to scientific inquiry by the direct superiority which science gives to the emulous votaries of the productive arts—this institution has opened all its treasures. Need we wonder at the effect produced by the glittering prize? Should we anticipate similar results under circumstances totally different, we might be greatly disappointed." Yet apparently these results are not, after all, especially brilliant.



languages are studied by none (so it appears, at least, from the only catalogue at hand). In the first year, a large majority take Latin, and a smaller number Greek. In the second, out of the forty-three students (catalogue of 1850-51), there are only *five* who do not take one or the other; and in the third, about one-third part take Greek, while Latin disappears. The results, therefore, of experiment at Brown University, so far as we have them, serve most explicitly to corroborate the inferences which have already been drawn from those previously examined.

If, finally, appeal be made to the catalogue of the University of Virginia itself, where the utmost freedom is allowed the student in the selection of his studies, we shall find the weight of evidence still leaning the same way, and tending to demonstrate the fact that the people *will* not abandon the Latin and the Greek. In each of these languages, the course of that University covers two years only; and it is presumed that there, as elsewhere, the two may be pursued simultaneously. Now, if from the total of the catalogue for 1853-54, which is 466, we subtract 199 students entirely professional, there remain 267 students under the Faculty of Arts. Of these, 176 are in the department of ancient languages, and 156 only in that of the modern. In mathematics there are 179, and in chemistry 220, many of the medical students taking this department; while in the remaining departments of natural philosophy and moral philosophy (the latter comprehending also metaphysics, rhetoric, logic, criticism, and political economy), the numbers fall

as low as 106 and 112 respectively. It appears, therefore, that in this University, in which students who aim at education remain three or four years, while the classical courses are completed in two, the proportion of the whole number (two-thirds) who, by the latest catalogue appear to be studying the learned languages, is so great as to indicate that nearly all, at one period or another, enroll themselves in that department.

The undersigned feel themselves, therefore, fully sustained by the unvarying testimony of facts, taken wherever they can be found, when they assert that there is really none of that aversion to the learned languages, or distaste for them, and none of that conviction of their want of practical utility, of which we hear so much, as being widely spread and deeply rooted among the people. There is none, at least among those who desire to be liberally educated, whether we include only such as submit themselves to the routine of study prescribed in the close colleges, or whether we leave the decision to the results of free volition, and confine our scrutiny to the most widely open universities of the Union. Nor is the ordinary college curriculum, as a whole, disapproved by the great majority of the people, or even avoided by any large proportion of students themselves, when the choice is in their hands. "It is found," says Dr. Manly, "that those [colleges] whose course of studies is fixed and uniform for all, have adopted such a course that, when the largest practicable liberty of selection is allowed, *not less than three-fourths of the students voluntarily fall into it*, as on the whole the best; and that

*this proportion, with larger experience, is of late years increasing."*

That there should be, nevertheless, a good deal of uttered discontent with college courses of study, is not surprising. For thirty years or more, it has been heard, sometimes in one part of the country and sometimes in another, always dwelling upon the same alleged evils—the tediousness and long duration of the course; the unpractical character of the studies; the sad waste of time expended over classic lore and the higher mathematics; the absolute neglect to impart that training which shall prepare the student, as he emerges from the institution, to grapple at once and familiarly with the affairs of life. But in this there is nothing which ought to surprise. "With the present century," says Dr. Wayland, in his report of 1850, "a new era dawned upon the world. A host of new sciences arose, all holding important relations to the progress of civilization. Here was a whole people in an entirely novel position. Almost the whole nation was able to read. Mind had been quickened to intense energy by the events of the Revolution. The spirit of self-reliance had gained strength by the result of that contest. A country rich in every form of capability had just come into their possession. Its wealth was inexhaustible; and its adaptation to the production of most of the great staples of commerce unsurpassed. All that was needed to develop its resources, was well-directed labor. But labor only can be skillfully directed by science; and the sciences now coming into notice were precisely those which

the condition of the country rendered indispensable to success. *That such a people could be satisfied with the teaching of Greek, Latin, and the elements of the Mathematics, was plainly impossible.*" Here, then, is the source of an early dissatisfaction with colleges, against which, as Dr. Wayland proceeds to show, these institutions endeavored to bear up—not by abandoning what they had taught before, but by "adding science after science to the course, as fast as the pressure from without seemed to require it." But, in the mean time, they have not extended the duration of the period of instruction. Had they done so, they "must have encountered the common prejudice in favor of a four years' course." In consequence of this, according to Dr. Wayland, into the particulars of whose calculation it is unnecessary to descend, the average length of time which can be devoted to each several subject of study (apart from the Greek and Latin) in American colleges, is but a fraction over six weeks. Hence has arisen a new dissatisfaction, which has had its special and local manifestations of activity, at different times and in different quarters, during the last half-century. It is, in the first place, a natural outbreak of that restless spirit of the age, which chafes impatiently with the desire to grasp results without submitting willingly to the labor necessary to prepare them. But it is, in the second place, a feeling of well-founded distrust of the possibility of teaching with thoroughness so much as is now attempted, in so little time. And in attempting so much, it is to be apprehended that colleges have themselves done a great deal to turn



away public attention from the true and fundamental object of collegiate education, and to encourage the idea that it is their duty to train youth with special reference to what are to be their pursuits in life. No such encouragement is necessary from such a source. The idea is, to far too great a degree, spontaneously current. And to this, after all, with perhaps that entire but very prevalent misconception of the distinction between education and instruction, which so often manifests itself in what is written on this subject, may be mainly ascribed the earnestness with which the university system of this country has been so perseveringly assailed. "A mere knowledge of facts and things," says President Sparks, "is too often looked upon as the *ultimate end* of education; whereas it is little less than *an accident*, the natural result of the discipline and training requisite to form an educated man. It depends on the single faculty of memory, which often exists with surprising activity, where the other faculties are languid or obtuse. Knowledge of *principles and causes* is the fruit of experience, observation, thought, solid and abiding, deeply wrought into the mind till it becomes an assimilated part of the intellectual man. *This* is the work of education, and its chief work."

The unreasonableness of expecting our colleges, whose proper business is, and has been from the beginning, to do this work of education proper, to provide also, in the brief space of time allotted to them with their pupils, that professional or technical training which shall prepare them to engage directly in the business

of life, has been already sufficiently considered. But to what has been said may very properly be added the important consideration suggested by the question, How much, after all, could the college accomplish, provided it were converted altogether into a school for the study of professions and of the practical arts of life? Received, as the students of all American colleges are received, with a very humble preparation, and in most instances with no established mental habits, or with very bad ones, they are not fit—at least as a general rule—to be directly introduced to the study of those professions or arts which are to occupy them in actual life. If it be replied here, that the proposition is not necessarily to introduce them to those studies thus directly, but only to make their elementary training of such as are manifestly subsidiary or fundamental to them, the rejoinder may be that the entire college course contains nothing which is not subsidiary to the successful study of any profession; and that, if the intention be to indicate those studies which have a direct affinity with the intended pursuit, the objection to their exclusive use is the serious one, that they will inevitably prevent the equal development of the faculties, and end in producing an unequally balanced mind. Yet, waiving every objection of this nature, what, after all, can the college do, at best or at worst, toward turning out a practical man? While time lasts, the farmer will continue to be made in the field, the manufacturer in the shop, the merchant in the counting-room, the civil engineer in the midst of the actual operations of

his science. The well-educated student, when he receives his diploma, is fitted, indeed, to enter upon any of these scenes of labor, and is capable, by his own independent effort, of perfecting himself in the knowledge and the skill which they demand; but to expect, by any kind of college training whatever, to furnish him with the ability or inspire him with the confidence to stand forth as a master of any one of these or similar professions, is entirely unreasonable and preposterous.

There can be little doubt that much of the bias in favor of open universities for the instruction of youth and men in all descriptions of knowledge, has grown out of the vague and generally erroneous notions floating through the country, in regard to the character of the universities of Germany. These institutions are substantially professional schools; and if any of their students are engaged in pursuits merely literary or scientific, those pursuits are of an order much less elementary than such as occupy the young men in our colleges. "The institution in Germany," observe the Faculty of Yale College, in their report already quoted, "which corresponds most nearly to our college, is the gymnasium. The universities are mostly occupied with *professional* students. In Halle, for example, of eleven hundred students, all except sixty are engaged in the study of theology, law, and medicine." As to the actual amount of instruction given in the gymnasia, the unpublished pamphlet of Bishop Potter, mentioned in a different part of this Report, cites, from the Report of Prof. Bache, on the State of Education in Europe, the

examples of three Prussian gymnasia, two in Berlin and one at Pforta, "as *representatives* of the instruction of the kingdom, preparatory to the university course." From these examples it appears, that "the pupil in two of these German gymnasia studies nearly if not quite as much mathematics as in our [Pennsylvania] University, and makes respectable proficiency in Physics, Physical Geography, Mechanics, and Chemistry. In that which concedes the least time to science (Pforta), he is taken into Conic Sections, the Diophantine Analysis, Trigonometry, Physics, Magnetism, &c." And in regard to Latin and Greek, and also Hebrew, the instruction is more thorough than is probably furnished in any of our colleges.\* No argument, therefore, can be drawn from the educational institutions of Germany to ours; or if such a one should be attempted, it ought to be rather for the creation of a new and higher description of schools, to which none but those who have completed the usual course of college study should be admitted, rather than for the conversion of our existing colleges into what in Germany would be mere nondescripts, having the form of the university and the grade of the gymnasium.

There is, moreover, reason to believe that the word university, in its popular acceptance in this country, has had something to do with promoting the bias of which mention has just been made. This word, says Sir William Hamilton, "in the language of the middle ages, was applied either loosely to any understood class

\* Princeton Review, Oct. 1852, and Oct. 1853.



of persons ; or strictly (in the acceptation of the Roman law) to a public incorporation, more especially (as equivalent with *communitas*) to the members of a municipality, or to the members of a 'general study':"—*studium generale*, "the oldest word for an unexclusive institution of higher education." Thus the name university denoted the entire body of persons engaged in study, under a given organization, and not, as it is now commonly understood, the entire circle of possible subjects of study:—it was *Universitas doctorum et scholarium*, and not *Universitas scientiarum*. It further appears, according to the same authority, that "it was the common custom to erect a university in only certain Faculties ; and not unfrequently a concession of the others was subsequently added." Instances are cited of universities established without any Faculty of Arts, and of others in which one or more of the higher Faculties were originally wanting. The mistake in regard to the meaning of this word, which in England has led to consequences of serious practical importance, and occasioned the agitation of legal questions of moment, has in this country been productive of the less grave but still annoying evil of aiding to promote those movements which have had for their object the breaking up of the established collegiate system. It may seem strange that a mere question of verbal definition should exercise any important influence in a question of this kind. To a thoughtful mind it would seem that, if the common acceptation of the word were a correct one, then in its application to the institutions which we

call universities it is a misnomer, capable of being corrected by the simplest of all possible processes, the adoption of a new name; but by no means involving the absurd necessity of remodeling the institution to suit the word. It has nevertheless had its effect; and this rarely fails to be perceptible, in any argument put forward in favor of changes like that which is now urged upon the University of Alabama.

In conclusion, the undersigned cannot but believe, that, on questions of this kind, some consideration is due to the weight of authority. The most eminent educators of youth in America, are almost with one voice opposed to a system like that of the University of Virginia, for American colleges. The Faculty of Yale College, at the time of the publication of their ably argued letter to the trustees of that institution, from which repeated quotations have been made in this Report, embraced some of the most distinguished and experienced instructors whom this country has produced; among whom we may especially signalize President Day, and Professors Kingsley, Silliman, Goodrich, and Olmsted.

It is certain that no college in the United States has ever commanded a higher respect, or possessed a more extended popularity, than this. And it is remarkable that though it was among the first—perhaps quite the first—to take a public and decided stand in opposition to the views of those who would break up the existing college system, and especially of those who would discard the learned languages from the curriculum of

college study, yet no period of its whole history has been distinguished by a more signal prosperity than that which has since elapsed. At no time have the Faculty of that celebrated institution shown the slightest disposition to descend from the high position which they assumed in 1828; and a recent letter received from Dr. Woolsey, the accomplished scholar who at present presides over it, accords entirely with the views which have been expressed in this Report. "We have ever," writes Dr. Woolsey, "been averse to the system pursued at Charlottesville, on the ground principally that students, at that stage of their education when they are in college, are incompetent to choose what they ought to study; and on the ground that, at that season, there is need of drilling and close examination—of a daily responsibility—habits of study being yet unformed, and immediate motives being needed to put young minds at work. It is surprising how much stronger a motive acts in professional study than in preparatory; the student in the former case feeling that success in life is in a good degree connected with his diligence, and by no means so much in the latter. Hence we are disinclined to an optional and to a lecture system. We would introduce both sparingly, and toward the close of a college life. And indeed a lecture system, without frequent examination, is of small account."

Dr. Woolsey then proceeds to consider the objections which are usually urged against the existing system. He observes, "There are two principal ones, 1st, that

students will not study what they do not like; and 2d, that there is an inaptitude in some for certain branches. To which may be added, that the course from the first may be accommodated, on the optional system, to the profession chosen. In reply to the last objection, we say that the discipline of languages and mathematics, and of moral science, is too evidently needed by all to allow us to doubt that it is, in the main, the correct system. The one-sidedness of men educated only (for example) for and in physical science, is quite apparent.

“There is real force in the other objections. Students cannot, as you must know, sometimes, be found to take hold of mathematics or Greek; and a college life does some, therefore, but little good. Others are incompetent, or nearly so, to master one of the disciplinary studies. The question arises, Is it desirable to modify the system for this sort of minds? How much will they gain on any system? Many of them very little. For the rest, I would have a certain optional system, say after half an academical life is over, in which hard mathematics could be chewed by those who don't like Greek, and hard Greek by those who don't like mathematics. You will see that we are old Fogies here. *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutare.*”

The position of Hon. Edward Everett, former President of Harvard University, on this question, as indicated by himself, has already been given. That of Dr. Walker, the present able head of the same University, is expressed in a letter holding the following decisive language: “We are far from wishing to prejudge the



result of the experiments which other colleges are trying. Our own experience, as far as it went, has satisfied us that, in American colleges, neither the age, nor the proficiency, nor the number of the students, nor the number of the teachers, are such as to make the introduction of an unrestricted elective system either advisable or practicable. Merely to arrange the hours of recitation on this plan so that they shall not interfere, and yet secure to each student his share of attention and keep him properly employed, will be found to be an almost insuperable difficulty. Most of the objects aimed at by the voluntary system, are more effectually and satisfactorily reached, as we think, by scientific and professional schools connected with the college proper."

Bishop Potter, of Pennsylvania, whose large experience as an officer and a trustee of several colleges, and whose signal ability and ardent zeal, displayed in the cause of education, entitle his opinion to the highest respect—who, it may be added, is also an earnest advocate of the open university system, in its proper place; and that is, "where young men, older and better trained than our ordinary collegians, with more active desire for improvement," and "where graduates of our colleges, and other young men bent on gaining knowledge," can be relied on to apply for its advantages,—concludes an interesting letter on this general subject, in these impressive words:—

"The attempt to popularize a college, is too often an attempt to extinguish its collegiate character, and

transform it into a high school. The classics are not taught as they should be in our colleges; and the great reason is, that too much time is given to other studies. In connection with the moral sciences, they are still, in my judgment—when well taught—the best gymnastic for the production of a high culture, such as we must have in the United States, if we mean to advance the great work of Christian civilization, and raise up divines, statesmen, and patriots, such as we need, perhaps, more than any other nation in the world.”

Hon. Theodore Frelinghuysen, long Chancellor of the New York City University, and now President of Rutgers College, New Jersey, speaks thus: “The plan of remodeling our colleges *for the times*, is, in my poor judgment, very unpromising to the interests of a sound education. It should be borne in mind, that the old time-honored system furnishes to the student the elements of every art and science that the modern activity of the mind has called into prominent notice. The benefits to be derived from classical studies (the dead languages, as they are called), are so rich and various, that it would be a calamity to put them aside. They discipline the mind and strengthen its powers, while they purify the taste. And moreover, we must rely upon them for the knowledge of our own language. The classics, like the works of the great artists of other times in painting and sculpture, are to be studied for their purity, and will abundantly recompense the student. I hope they may still have a full share of the college course. They should be studied, if never opened

again in after life. Much of the benefit will live after them."

Dr. Thornwell, President of S. C. College, in his letter to Gov. Manning, already quoted from, expresses himself on the subject of two changes which had been proposed in that institution—the first being to introduce, substantially, the Virginia scheme; and the second to permit students to confine themselves to special branches of study—as follows: "In the first place, young men are incompetent to pronounce beforehand what studies are subjectively the most beneficial. It requires those who have experienced the disciplinary power of different studies, to determine their relative value. Only a scholar can say what will make a scholar. The experience of the world has settled down upon a certain class and order of studies; and the verdict of ages and generations is not to be set aside by the caprices, whims, or prejudices of those who are not even able to comprehend the main end of education. In the next place, if our undergraduates were competent to form a judgment, their natural love of indolence and ease would, in the majority of cases, lead them to exclude those very studies which are the most improving, precisely because they are so; that is, because in themselves and in the method of teaching them, they involve a degree and intensity of mental exercise which is positively painful. Self-denial is not natural to man; and he manifests but little acquaintance with human nature, who presumes, as a matter of course, that the *will* will choose what the *judgment* commends. *Video meliora proboque, deteriora*

*sequor*, is more pre-eminently true of the young than of the old. They are the creatures of impulse. \* \* \* Easy exercises are preferred, simply because they do not tax the mind. The practical problem with the mass of students is—the least work and the easiest done. Is it easy? Is it short? these are the questions which are first asked about a lesson. I must therefore consider any attempt to relax the compulsory feature of the college course, as an infallible expedient for degrading education. The college will cease to *train*. It may be a place for literary triflers, but a place for students it cannot be.”

And again: “With respect to the other change, that of allowing students under certain circumstances, to pursue a partial course, it is evidently contradictory to the fundamental aim of the college. These students are not seeking knowledge for the sake of discipline, but with reference to ulterior uses. They come not to be trained to *think*, but to learn to act in definite departments of exertion. It is *professional*, not *liberal* education which they want. The want, I acknowledge, should be gratified; it is a demand which should be supplied. But the college is not the place to do it. That was founded for *other* purposes, and it is simply preposterous to abrogate its constitution out of concessions to a necessity, because the necessity happens to be real. What therefore ought to be done is, not to change the nature of the college, but, leaving that untouched to do its own work, to organize schools with special reference to this class of wants.”



The following emphatic expression of opinion, is from Dr. Church, whose great experience at the head of the University of Georgia, where the voluntary system in one form, has long been subject of experiment, entitles it to much weight: "*Far* the larger number of students who enter the colleges of the United States are, I apprehend, too young to be thrown upon their own responsibility in a matter of so much importance as their education. They are incapable of judging what is best for their mental and moral culture. Leave them to elect the studies which they will pursue, and much the larger portion will take what they consider the easiest and pleasantest course. Leave them to study or not to study, and most will prefer the pleasant circle of friends, to the labor and self-denial necessary to profitable mental culture. \* \* \* Study is labor; and but few will, at the age at which most of our college students enter our institutions, bend the energies of their minds to the acquisition of knowledge, if left wholly to themselves. The Virginia system was intended, I suppose, by its illustrious founder, for *men*—not *boys*. It would answer well for our best scholars, who wish to prosecute their studies after having gone through a good collegiate course. Till the young man is about twenty-one, I am of opinion that it is the great business of education to develop and to properly discipline his intellectual and moral powers and susceptibilities. I apprehend that our usual course of study is as well calculated to do this as any which has yet been suggested. And if, in the common college course, and under the usual discipline, all

cannot be influenced to apply themselves in such a manner as to be greatly benefited, a much larger number will than under a merely voluntary or elective system."

Dr. Church, it will be seen, speaks of the elective system, as if the uncontrolled election of studies were vested in the student himself. It has been sometimes assumed that the manifest injudiciousness of such an arrangement might be obviated, by putting the election in the hands of the parent, instead of those of the student. In nine cases out of ten, however, this regulation is experimentally proved to be inoperative; and the result has been found to be precisely what would have occurred without it. The election is *always*, in any institution which allows election at all, in the parent's hands. If he takes the interest he ought to take in his son's education, he will use it without being required to do so by any college law; if not, he will use it to give the sanction of parental authority to the student's choice.

Dr. Swain, the distinguished President of the University of North Carolina, is no less decided in favor of the views which this Report has presented, than any other of the distinguished authorities already cited. "Mr. Jefferson's original conception of the University of Virginia," writes Dr. Swain, "with the exception that it was somewhat in advance of the age, was an admirable one. His design was to establish a system of schools, in which young men who had completed the usual course of scholastic training, might have an opportunity to review all their studies, and push their researches in

every branch of literature and science to a greater extent than was practicable elsewhere. Experience has shown, that there is too little wealth and too little learned leisure in the country to afford the requisite patronage to an institution of so high a grade. There may be, by the close of the present century, but there is not now. Instead of scholars resorting to that institution to enlarge their attainments in philology and the severer sciences, young men imperfectly acquainted with Webster's spelling-book press there, to enter upon the elements of arithmetic and English grammar. A few, and but a small proportion, go with better preparation and more extended views, become candidates for degrees, and make valuable attainments. The University has unquestionably rendered eminent service to the country, by training a few ripe scholars; but whether the good is not counterbalanced by the evil inflicted, in sending forth a multitude of sciolists bedizened with her livery, is an inquiry entitled to more consideration than it has received. The success of the institution in securing patronage, is not unfrequently over-estimated. With all the advantages of prestige attached to the names of Jefferson and Virginia, with an ample endowment, an able Faculty, in the midst of a numerous population and great wealth, a comparison of catalogues during the last twenty years will probably satisfy you that the number of undergraduates proper has not been greater there than here. It is the schools of law and medicine, which have given the great prominence in numbers, and not the regular academic corps."

And, in regard to what is said of the demand for "practical education," Dr. Swain observes,—“In my judgment, no system of education can claim to be practical, in this country and at the present age of the world, of which thorough instruction in the learned languages and the mathematics does not constitute the substratum. You may add any amount of attainment in modern languages and natural and experimental science, that increasing wealth and leisure may permit; but the former can never be dispensed with.”

In fine, the President of our own University, after patiently and laboriously looking into all this subject, only two or three years ago, at the request of the Board of Trustees, announces the conclusion to which the investigation has driven him, in the following passages of his report: “It is obvious that, while experiments among the colleges, for meeting the public demand, have been innumerable, the new system (as it is called) has not generally secured the approbation of educators.” “Voluntariness in the selection of studies cannot be complete and absolute under any system.” “Those [colleges] which aim at specific adaptation to the business of life in the courses of study, and lay claim to the greatest voluntariness and the nearest approximation to the wants of the age, and accommodation to the individual, are obliged, *practically*, to admit that a specific education, without the main features of the old college course, is necessarily one-sided and imperfect.” “The ‘partial course,’ which does not lead to a degree, is an acknowledged failure everywhere, not much sought,



and attended with but little satisfaction to any party. The creation of a new degree which may be reached without classical attainments, and the separation of old degrees so as to admit of less classical study in some cases than formerly, are expedients intended to apply the stimulus of collegiate honors without the aid of the inspiration drawn from classic fountains. As experiments, they are too recent and too limited to show the effect on members or mental culture." And finally: "As an expedient for increasing numbers in this institution (extending its benefits to a greater number of the citizens of the State) a change of organization is deemed questionable. \* \* \* The statistics in this report have already furnished proof of the fact that efforts of this kind, intended to *popularize* institutions, have not replenished them; that costly arrangements, adapted both to general and individual wants, have attracted but a scanty increase; while, in a noted instance, the fullest classes have been those of the old college system."

That the weight of authority, no less than the deductions of reason, is entirely opposed to the expediency of a change in the college system of the country so radical as is proposed for this University, cannot, therefore, be questioned. Yet that the system admits of improvement, its friends have nowhere attempted to deny. The great burthen of studies which at present presses on the course, the evil of which Dr. Wayland has so ably exhibited, ought in some manner to be disposed of. We must come back to the simple idea of the original

college, and endeavor to restrict these institutions to the discharge of their proper function of *education*; leaving mainly to special institutions connected with colleges, as suggested in the letter of Dr. Walker, or separate from them, the business of supplying facts, information, knowledge for its uses—that is to say, all *instruction* designed simply as such. Bishop Potter, in his remarks at the close of the debate on college systems at the Cleveland convention, indicates what to the undersigned appears to be the course which true wisdom would dictate. “Were the speaker,” he said, “called to reconstruct the *course of studies* in colleges, his motto would be *multum, non multa*. He would greatly diminish the number of studies which *all* must pursue. These he would have taught for a much longer time, much more thoroughly, and in a more scholar-like way. Certain other branches, such as Natural History, &c., he would *make accessible* to all, through the ablest and most brilliant professors, delivering short courses of lectures on the rudiments. Other branches he would reserve for those who had special qualifications, who would pursue them eagerly and spontaneously.” The idea of Prof. Potter, in regard to the lectures on special subjects, above hinted at, is that the most eminent professors in these branches might lecture, by arrangement, in many colleges to which they are not specially attached; his impression (a very just one) being, as he expresses it in a letter, that, “to a young man who has reached the last year of his college life, one month of intercourse with a great master in

any branch, is worth more, in the way of permanent incitement and impulse, than many months of study with an inferior teacher." But leaving this topic aside, it is evident that the plan which he suggests for the relief of colleges under the oppressive weight of the great mass of matter which they attempt to teach, is the only true one, the only one from which relief *can* come. The sole alternative is to lengthen the period of collegiate training and instruction—an alternative to which, evidently, the people will not submit. If, in the progress of time, it shall become possible so to elevate the requisitions for admission into college, as to throw back much of the elementary training upon the preparatory schools, and if these schools, in this country, shall ever be brought up to the grade of the German gymnasium, or anywhere near it, then indeed we may reasonably hope to teach in our colleges, and teach well, all which we now attempt to teach, and it is to be feared too often teach ill. That state of things can only supervene by degrees, and can only be a reality in the distant future. It is our business to legislate for the present.

In regard to our own University, in case a reorganization of the plan of instruction be resolved on, the following, in the opinion of the undersigned, are the principles according to which it should be regulated:—

1. To prescribe a definite curriculum of study, designed as a mental discipline, to extend over the entire four years, and to which all regular candidates for graduation are to be required to conform. In this,

however, to include only those branches of study, or certainly very few but those, which, by the consent of the learned of all ages, are entitled to be regarded as the best instruments for evolving and exercising the powers of the mind.

2. To embrace all the remaining studies of the course, which are thus thrown out, in a group, out of which the Faculty may, at the proper time, select such as seem fittest to the intellectual wants of each individual student, as ascertained by the observation of his tastes, mental habits, and actual attainments during the earlier years of study; and to provide for his instruction in these, without exacting from him, as at present, attention to the whole number.

In the application of these principles, it seems to the undersigned advisable that, during the first two years of the course, no study should be introduced which is not obligatory upon all the students. The present arrangement of the hours at which the daily exercises occur, need not therefore of necessity be interfered with. Whether or not that is the best arrangement, the undersigned do not undertake to pronounce; but at present they see no reason to recommend any alteration in this respect, in regard to this part of the course. Should, however, any portion of the studies of the junior and senior year, or of either, be made elective, it will probably be found convenient to assign recitations or lectures for these classes in some branches at other hours, additional to those fixed by the present regulations, and without disturbing the latter. What



particular distribution of time may be best adapted to secure all the ends aimed at by this new system of instruction, it will perhaps be best to leave to the more mature deliberation of the Faculty. A table of exercises, or *roster*, herewith submitted, may be regarded as simply in the light of a suggestion for the purpose of inviting amendment, than as a positive recommendation.

Should a reorganization of the plan of instruction on these principles be resolved upon, it becomes important to decide what studies shall be placed in the elective group. To this class, it appears to the undersigned, that there can be no hesitation in referring,—

1st. All such as deal principally in facts of observation;

2d. Such as require a peculiar natural aptitude for their successful prosecution; and

3d. The study of the languages, ancient or modern, pursued beyond the limit prescribed by the obligatory course.

Under the first head may be included all the branches of natural history, and also geology, mineralogy, physiology, meteorology, and, possibly, a second course of chemistry.

Under the second may be embraced all the branches of the mathematics which rest upon the algebraic, or symbolic, method (elementary algebra excepted), and embracing in the existing course, algebra applied to geometry, analytical geometry,

and the calculus, differential and integral; to which may be added spherical trigonometry.

The third requires no specifications.

The undersigned design to enter into no argument as to the propriety of the distinctions which they have thus made between the subjects now overloading the curriculum of college study. Since it is an admitted fact that no student can possibly now be thorough in all of them, limited as he is to the very few weeks which can only be given to each, according to present arrangements, it can be no serious objection to the proposed plan to say, that it must necessarily cut off every student from something. That is very true; but it is equally true that the entirely voluntary system permits him to do the same for himself; and what is more, makes it nearly certain that he will do it, while it fails to guaranty to him a systematic intellectual training at all.

The studies which will remain obligatory upon every individual, after those above specified are excluded from the regular course, are such as are universally regarded as furnishing the best discipline of the mind and the most equable exercise of the various faculties; and such as, at the same time, by a consent almost universal, and quite so if we except the learned languages from the list, are esteemed as being in themselves attainments absolutely indispensable to every man of education. Moreover, in regard to the learned languages, it has already been shown, that the dissent just hinted at, is actually more imaginary than

real, that it is limited to a very small number of persons, and that in this number we find hardly a single name of any authority either in the great field of education, or in the world of letters.

By the adoption, then, of a system of instruction founded on the principles above stated, and in its practical application securing instruction, in any of the branches of knowledge which usually form a part of every collegiate course, to those and those only who are likely to derive positive profit from their study, while all are equally subjected to that thorough education of the mind which it is the proper business as it was the original design of the college to bestow, it appears to the undersigned that whatever is objectionable in the existing system may be eliminated, without putting at hazard the sound prosperity of the institution by changes unnecessarily large and startling, and which, whatever confidence in their wisdom their immediate advocates and friends may entertain, are certainly regarded with anxious distrust by a large proportion of our most judicious and thoughtful fellow-citizens.

If along with the change here proposed, some attention be paid to certain matters of detail, in regard to which amendment appears to be possible, the efficiency of the whole system, in the opinion of the undersigned, cannot fail to be materially improved. The honors and distinctions now awarded by the University, depend on a method of estimating scholarship by giving a numerical value to every performance, and preserving a record of every exercise corresponding to its adjudged

merit. To the undersigned this method appears to be faulty in two particulars: first, it is a departure from the sound principle on which the prerogative of granting degrees was designed to be exercised by universities—and that is, that none should be admitted to the honor but such as should be found, by thorough trial, to be actually possessed of the required attainments at the time of receiving the degree; and secondly, it does nothing to stimulate, and in fact it does sometimes appear to deaden, that honorable pride of scholarship, which, to the generous youth, is one of the most powerful incitements to intellectual effort.

In regard to the first particular, it may be said that the present marking system tends to induce a habit of “studying up” or “cramming” for the immediate recitation, without regard to such a thorough understanding of the subject, as shall fix it permanently in the mind. And to this may be added, that, by making the recitation of the day or of the hour the all-important object, its influence is to interfere with the formation of comprehensive or connected views of a subject of study as a whole, or the mutual dependency of its parts upon each other, but to present it rather as a succession of detached and independent doses of knowledge, each to be taken by itself, without regard to what precedes or follows. The consequence is, that by the aid of a tolerable memory, a plausible display may be made at the moment of recitation, when, a few weeks after, it would be difficult for the student to recall any part of what he had so glibly retailed at first. Nor is this absolutely



the worst consequence which, in some instances, proceeds from the same cause. Artifices are often devised by students averse to labor, by which to make a false exhibit of knowledge, and thus secure from the teacher a high estimate for a performance which possesses no merit at all. Concealed papers, interlined books, aid secretly obtained at the moment of recitation by the prompting of a fellow-student, exercises and compositions plagiarized from books, problems and demonstrations obtained from better scholars, and many similar expedients, enable a student often to secure an apparently high grade of scholarship upon the record, when at the same time, his real attainments are very low. These evils, which seem in both cases to be consequences which the system directly encourages, may, in the opinion of the undersigned, be both of them removed by a slight alteration of the mode of determining grade in scholarship. Let this depend to a degree almost exclusive of any other test, upon the periodical and final examinations, and very little, if at all, upon the record of daily recitation. It is important that such a record should still be kept, that uniformity of attention to study may be secured, and that the negligent and grossly deficient may be admonished, or required to withdraw; but in the valuation of substantial scholarship, let thorough examination be the principal as it is the only sure test of merit. If, also, to this be added the suffrages of the students themselves, in regard to the comparative rank of their classmates in literary and scientific attainments, as at Yale College,

and as suggested by Sir William Hamilton, in his ideal of "Oxford as it might be," we should offer to youth one of the highest inducements that could be offered to lead them to covet a reputation with their fellow-students, who know them thoroughly, for genuine scholarship, instead of striving, as now, to secure on the books of the Faculty a record of merit, founded on a basis, at the least illusive, if not fraudulent.

The habit of looking to a distant, and not to an immediate responsibility, will secure more earnest study, and a more sincere desire and determination to understand principles, rather than commit to the memory, facts. It will, moreover, be attended with the knowledge and conviction that the responsibility is a real one, which (if the examinations are properly conducted) no art can evade, and for which there must be a substantial and real preparation.

In order effectually to secure these ends, it may be deemed desirable to give to the examinations a greater duration than at present, and for this purpose to throw all the three term examinations together at the end of the year; which will provide for an annual examination of three weeks—a duration which might, perhaps, be profitably extended to a month. And in addition to this, a biennial examination might be held, as at Yale College, and a final one at the end of the four years, at which the classes should be examined upon all the studies they had pursued from the beginning up to that time. This would make the distant responsibility a reality so serious as to necessitate the attainment of

genuine, instead of seeming scholarship, and would remove the temptations which now exist, to fall into habits of systematic evasion of study.

There remains one other particular, in regard to which a change appears to be desirable. According to the rules at present existing in this University, if a student fails in the performance of any particular exercise, on account of sickness, or other sufficient excuse, he is permitted to prepare and perform this exercise by himself separately, and is entitled to receive credit for the performance, precisely as if it had been accomplished in its due season. Should the principle of estimating scholarship according to the recorded marks of the term exercises be abandoned, then this regulation, as dependent on it, may as well be abandoned likewise. But if otherwise, it is still to be desired that this, as the undersigned believe, worse than useless rule, should be dispensed with by itself. In the first place, the student ought to be habituated in college, to contemplate the stern truth that men's misfortunes will never be accepted in life, as a reason why their competitors should pause and wait for them, or should offer them a second trial, in the race for the world's distinctions. By sickness, or other misfortune, the student loses the benefit of a performance which might have counted in his favor. Be it so—let him accept the loss like a man. Another day it may befall his rival. And it is well to learn, by small mishaps like these, to bear those greater ills which may lie before us in the world's ceaseless struggle, where the race too often *is* to the swift, and the bat-

tle to the strong. More than this, it is well to cultivate that energetic spirit which scorns to droop at every trivial pain, or to relax effort at every insignificant discouragement; but which presses steadily onward to its purpose, with a perseverance which never flags while progress is a possibility.

With these suggestions, the undersigned conclude what they have to say in regard to the important subject now pending before the Faculty and the Board of Trustees. At the time of their appointment, they had not contemplated any further action than a simple compliance with the request contained in the communication of the Board, accompanied, perhaps, by a mere programme of such a scheme as they have endeavored to describe in this Report, for comparison with that which had been specifically called for. Any very radical change in a system of instruction so generally approved as that which has long existed here, they had not regarded as a possibility. A growing conviction, however, that the cause of sound education in Alabama is more seriously in danger than they had supposed, has constrained them, under the pressure of a deep sense of duty, to present in full the reasons which lead them to deprecate the introduction here of an educational system which a majority of our wisest men regard with distrust, and which has never been more than doubtfully successful in any college which has tried it in the United States.

F. A. P. BARNARD,  
JNO. W. PRATT.

*University of Alabama, Sept. 18, 1854.*



LETTERS

OF

COLLEGE GOVERNMENT,

AND THE EVILS INSEPARABLE FROM

The American College System

IN ITS PRESENT FORM:

ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED TO HON. A. B. MEEK, ONE OF THE EDITORS OF  
THE MOBILE REGISTER.

BY

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# INTRODUCTORY.

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THE letters embraced in the following pages are republished, in compliance with numerous solicitations from sources entitled to respect. It may serve to explain the somewhat desultory manner in which the topics which they touch are treated, to say that they were originally designed for the columns of a daily newspaper, and that they were expected to enjoy only the ephemeral existence which such a channel of publication could secure. In reproducing them here, it might, no doubt, have been possible to subject them to a process of reconstruction, by which whatever they may contain of general interest might have been more happily presented ; while superfluities might, at the same time, have been retrenched, repetitions avoided, and all that is of merely local application, suppressed entirely. But this, by the pressure of more important occupations, has been rendered impracticable ; and they are therefore reprinted with but very slight alterations of their original form, in the belief that their imperfections, though they may do little credit to the writer, will not tend to disparage the cause which he advocates.

It is obvious that, if there are evils really inherent in the existing system of college organization, the correction of these evils can hardly be looked for until the public demand it. So long as the people are content to take things as they are, so long as patronage is bestowed without misgiving upon institutions embracing, as do most of our colleges at present, the features which it is the object of these letters to exhibit as objectionable, just so long, of course, will there exist no urgent motive to induce those who control such institutions to modify them in any manner which may involve expense. But if the public mind can be awakened to the magnitude of the evils inseparable from the existing college system, though it be so far only as to demand that new colleges shall be constructed upon a wiser plan, and if the evidence of the change of public sentiment shall

appear in the greater favor shown to such, then it is to be reasonably expected that others, out of the mere instinct of self-preservation, will ultimately conform themselves to the popular preference. The appeal, therefore, must for the present be to the people. In making such an appeal in regard to an interest so vast, a single individual may well feel his insignificance. But there are in the community great numbers of intelligent men who well know the evils attendant on the present college system; men who, having been educated in colleges, have seen and felt them, but have perhaps hardly considered the question how far they are capable of removal; and from among such men, if their attention can be drawn to the subject, the isolated advocate of reform may reasonably hope that many will become his hearty coöperators in the endeavor to impress the public mind. Were it not for the existence of such a class, and for the fact that they are far more influential than any other in proportion to their numbers, the writer of these pages would be disposed to regard the idea of a possible reform of the prevailing college system as chimerical in the highest degree. Nor even when they shall become fully aroused to the importance of the change, if that shall ever be, and shall lend their united efforts to bring it to pass, is it to be expected that the object can be very quickly accomplished. So large are the pecuniary interests involved, that the disposition to change may not always be accompanied by the immediate power; and an evil system may, in many cases, be perpetuated for years, for no reason but the mere inability to abandon it. \* Still, though the benefits of the desired reform should be reserved for the next, or even for a distant, generation, its advocates should strive none the less earnestly to demonstrate its necessity; since it is only the faithfulness of their present efforts which renders even that distant good a possibility.

It may be observed of these letters, that, though accident may be said to have determined the time of their appearance, and though they were written without any distinctly premeditated plan, yet in substance they embrace the convictions of some years of experience and reflection; and the writer avails himself of this opportunity to acknowledge that his attention was first drawn strongly to the subject by the valuable little work of Dr. Wayland, to which he has taken occasion repeatedly to refer.

*University of Mississippi, Dec. 16, 1854.*



# LETTERS ON COLLEGE GOVERNMENT.



## LETTER I.

STRICTURES OF THE MOBILE REGISTER, ON CERTAIN REGULATIONS AND  
USAGES EXISTING IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA, CONSIDERED.—  
EXAMINATION OF THE LAW KNOWN AS "THE EXCULPATION LAW."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MOBILE REGISTER,—

SIR:—In the Camden Republic of June 24th, I find some remarks credited to the Register, on a few of the features of college government recognized in the University of Alabama. Your strictures, which accord very well with observations I have often heard from intelligent gentlemen in private conversation, indicate that there is a defect or a difficulty somewhere in the American college system, to which it is desirable that the attention of the whole community should be understandingly drawn. I say a defect in the system, because nearly all the colleges in the United States are founded upon the same system, and the features to which exception has been taken, are features which have been adopted in each, without change, from those which are older. The visitation of the rooms of students, by members of the Faculty, which is spoken

of in your article as “the plan pursued by *the Faculty of our University*,” is practiced in every college in the country, in which students reside in the college buildings—that is to say, in every one in which it is practicable. If it is a bad plan, the extent of its prevalence does not, I freely admit, make it any better; but the fact that it is so prevalent, may not be known to all the readers of the *Register*; and for this reason an inference to our especial prejudice (which I am sure you did not design) may be drawn from your remarks.

Again, “the plan *adopted at our University*, of putting the student upon his *voir dire*,” is not peculiar to us, as might be inferred by a cursory reader. It is really an “adopted” plan, and the words of the law prescribing it are a literal transcript from the printed laws of the College of South Carolina. This again makes the plan no better, if it be true that it is intrinsically bad. But it suggests the possibility that a student, however distasteful he may find the system of discipline practiced here, cannot reasonably expect to mend his position in this respect by resorting elsewhere.

All American colleges hold their students amenable to the authorities for violations of good order and good morals. All have a government of written law, and a brief and simple penal code. Yet no Board of Overseers or Trustees has yet been able, with all the advantages derived from the personal experience of its members as college students or college officers, or from observation of the practical working of different systems for more than a century, to devise a mode of administering that part of

college government which relates to offenses, without embracing in it provisions which have been sometimes made a subject of grave complaint, and sometimes of unsparing censure, directed against the governing body.

In the article upon which I am commenting, for instance, it is urged against the "exculpation law" that "it is contrary to natural justice—contrary to 'the perfection of reason,' the common law—and contrary to any considerate method of moral culture." As my present purpose is not to vindicate exculpation law, or to meddle with it in any manner, I shall join no issue here. Suppose it be all you say of it, I wish to ask you whether or not (and I ask now for information, for I really do not know) it is the public impression that the principle of this law is at the bottom of our *ordinary methods of proceeding* in cases of college discipline? I ask this question, because, admitting the principle to be as exceptionable as you claim, the answer to it will have much to do in determining how far our system of government is odious. If what I see in the public prints (or have seen in former years) may be assumed to furnish me with any fair means of judging, I am justified in thinking that we are popularly supposed to proceed on this plan every day or every week. Now, the fact is that I have been an officer of the University of Alabama more than sixteen years; and during this long period the offensive law has been resorted to only three times. The unfrequency of its actual application may serve to show that it is a measure in its original design intended only for those extreme cases in which the alternative is the annihilation of all government, and the tri-



umph of anarchy. Whenever they have been driven to the adoption of this expedient, the Faculty of the University have never put it into practice without a sense of pain and sorrow, for which their denouncers of the press or among the people never give them credit. They are charged with the preservation of order in college. They have a duty to execute, and they are not the authors of the system they are required to administer. When the question is reduced to this—shall law prevail, or shall misrule be triumphant and all the operations of college come to an end? they must use the only means put into their hands to secure the supremacy of law, whether they like them or not, or whether or not the surrounding public approve. And this happens, perhaps, once in many years; while the comments which so often reach us, through our correspondence, through conversations with gentlemen at or from a distance, or through the press, proceed on the assumption that it is the commonest thing in the world, and that very possibly, the first business of the Faculty every morning after breakfast is, to put some twenty or thirty students on their "*voir dire*."

I suppose that no government is anything better than a name, which possesses no means of protecting public order by the compulsory discovery of truth, when order has been violated and the witnesses are certainly, or the offenders approximately, known. There are, so far as I know, but two modes of proceeding effectual for this purpose, and these are—1. That which is sanctioned by "the perfection of reason, the Common Law," to compel the testimony of witnesses to the offense; or, 2. The South

Carolina plan, adopted here, to require the innocent to say that they are innocent. The former is the plan of all the older colleges at the North; and, perhaps, of the newer also. The latter is peculiarly the Southern plan, introduced expressly as a concession to the scruples of sensitive young men. Since, however, the one and the other, when successfully enforced, result alike in securing the ends of government in the detection of the offender, the substitute has proved no more palatable than the law which it replaced; and the northern plan and the southern plan are equally under the ban of popular opinion. In the mean time, one or the other of them, from the stern necessity of the case, maintains its place in the written code of every college; and both, when the painful necessity arises, continue to be put into force, in spite of their unpopularity all over the country.

If our friends among the people, or if our friends of the press, would turn their attention to the true point of difficulty, and would aid us with advice how we may escape from our present embarrassment, we would receive their suggestions with gratitude; and whatever we should find in them adapted to remedy the evil, we would earnestly recommend to the consideration of the Board of Trustees. To judge from the manner in which we are often spoken of, it would seem to be thought that we delight in "exculpation" laws, and that we are never more happy than when the college guillotine is in active operation. I am not using the language of hyperbole when I say this; I but repeat almost literally what I have often heard. Is not this unreasonable? Yet our case is not an isolated

one. Similar sanguinary tastes are imputed quite as frequently to other Faculties. Can it be supposed that the members of College Faculties generally—men, be it considered, who have been selected from the community on account of some supposed more than average fitness for their places—can it be supposed that they are as a class so far behind the rest of the community, in their sympathies with the young men for whose benefit they labor, or in their judgments of what will most promote the welfare of their pupils, as to lean from choice towards measures which shock the public sensibilities, and to require a popular censorship to restrain their tyrannical propensities?

As no one has yet suggested to us what new substitute we should adopt, in case we consent to expunge the “exculpation” law from the college code, we are now held up to public odium for an evil which we did not create, and which we know not how to remove. Even you, Mr. Editor, would not have us go backward, and adopt the common-law principle, which compels every witness to his neighbor’s offense to testify to the fact or suffer. In this application, even “the perfection of reason” would strike you as an abomination. I do not say that I should entirely agree with you; but I state what you will admit to be a fact. I doubt if such of our citizens as condemn the law of “exculpation,” have ever set it beside these older laws which it superseded. For their information, I will give an example of both. The following is extracted verbatim from the laws of Yale College:

“Whenever a student shall be required by one of the Faculty to disclose his knowledge concerning any disorder,

offense, or offender, against a law of the college, and shall refuse to make such disclosure, he may be sent home or dismissed. No student shall be questioned for any testimony he may give in regard to a violation of a law of this college; and in case any student shall so question his fellow-student to ascertain whether he hath testified, or with intent to bring into contempt any student because he hath testified, the student so acting shall be deemed to have committed an offense, and may be proceeded against by the Faculty, according to the aggravation of the offense, even to dismissal."

While this was law in all American colleges, as it still is at New Haven, the objection raised to it by students was, that it is dishonorable to testify against a fellow-student. The substitute was devised to obviate this objection; and as it stands in the code of the University of Alabama, it is as follows:

"In ordinary cases, and for mere college misdemeanors, no student shall be called upon to give information against another; but when several persons are known to contain among them the guilty person or persons, that the innocent may not equally suffer with the guilty, they are all liable to be severally called up, and each to be put upon his own exculpation, unless the magnanimity of the guilty shall relieve the Faculty from the necessity of this expedient, by an ingenuous confession of his or their own fault. If any student, when thus permitted to declare his innocence, shall decline to exculpate himself, he shall be considered as taking the guilt of the offense upon himself, and encountering all the consequences. If a student shall

deny that he is guilty, that shall be taken as *prima facie* evidence of his innocence; but if it shall afterwards appear from satisfactory evidence that he was really guilty, he shall be considered unworthy to remain in the University."

The requisition to testify *against* a fellow-student being here abandoned, a scruple arose, of a character entirely new. Hitherto it had been no part of the unwritten code of undergraduate law, that the good should protect, screen, and suffer martyrdom for the bad; the whole college body were not held bound to become accessories after the fact to any enormity; or to obstruct, by united and systematic action, the operations of law for its detection. The popular sentiment in college favored the view that it is well that law shall have its course—it is well that offenders shall be reached and dealt with—it is well that good order and good morals shall be preserved,—but that it is not well that a student shall become an informer upon his fellow-student. I say that this was the popular sentiment, because I know it, having myself been educated in a college where the old law prevailed. What popular sentiment is with us now is evidenced in the fact, that it has the power to force young men of the highest standing for morality and personal rectitude of conduct, into a combination for the defeat of all inquiry, and for the protection of a few disorderly individuals, whose turbulence, both by night and by day, is such as to obstruct all the operations of the University. Whether the young men in their scrupulous regard for what is due to good fellowship, are not beginning to "put too fine a point on



it," I shall not stop here to inquire. It is sufficient for me to say that when matters reach a pass like this, the necessity that *something* should be done is crying, and all the wisdom of University Boards has hitherto been able to discover but the two modes of proceeding I have pointed out, viz.—that which has the sanction of the "perfection of reason," and that which makes every student liable to be called on for his own exculpation.

Lest any erroneous inference should be drawn from the *time* at which this letter is written, let me observe, in conclusion, that, though it is elicited by remarks of yours upon the late troubles in the University, it has no reference whatever to them; and that the "exculpation law" was not applied during those troubles. Students already under suspension, have, it is true, as a condition of restoration, been required to make some disclaimers. Whatever may be said or thought of the expediency of this requisition, of which I say nothing, thus much is at least true, that to refuse to make the disclaimers required, could, at this time, operate no advantage nor secure any protection to any fellow-student, since, when they were exacted, all parties were equally separated from the University already.

Now, Mr. Editor, do not believe, because I have detained you so long over the matter of this law, that I see nothing in what seems to be the necessity of its existence to regret, or nothing in the evils which too usually follow its application to deplore. If you do so, you will do me great injustice. My only object in asking you to publish these remarks, is to draw the attention of thinking men in

the community to the most difficult point connected with the whole subject of college discipline—the question how shall the supremacy of law be maintained in the last emergency, without an admitted power in Faculties to use either the means of investigation employed by civil courts, or those gentler, and (as was once thought certainly) less offensive ones, in consideration of which they have been content to yield the former.

The topic which principally occupies this letter, is but one of several connected with college organization and government, on which I have often wished to address some observations to my fellow-citizens. With your permission, now that my hand is in, I will endeavor to make one or two further, but I hope not quite so formidable, encroachments upon your space hereafter.

*University of Alabama, July 1, 1854.*

## LETTER II.

REASONS WHY "THE EXCULPATION LAW" HAS PROVED A FAILURE.—INQUIRY HOW FAR IT SHOULD BE DEEMED DISHONORABLE FOR ONE STUDENT TO GIVE TESTIMONY IMPLICATING ANOTHER.

IN my last letter I promised, at greater leisure, to examine still further some of the particulars in which the government of American colleges is attended with difficulties, so great as to indicate a fault somewhere inherent in the system itself. I proceed to redeem my promise.

It is certain that the greatest of the difficulties here spoken of is that to which my last communication was principally devoted, viz. the means of suppressing disturbances of the peace, or of detecting their authors, when all ordinary appeals have failed, and it has become necessary to invoke the penalties of the law. Upon that subject I have not yet completed all that I have to say.

I assumed that the very idea of government implies the possession of the power to compel, in some manner or other, the disclosure of truth, when that is necessary for the protection of order, and for the maintenance of the supremacy of law. I described the two modes by which it has been attempted, in different colleges, to exercise this power: the first being no other than that used in civil courts, and the second being the mode prescribed in what is commonly called the "exculpation law," as it exists in this University and some other Southern colleges.

I have shown that the second of these modes was originally devised for the purpose of obviating objections which had been made to the first. That it has completely failed in its object, is rendered obvious by the frequency with which we hear it denounced in conversation and in the public prints. For an instance, I need go no further than to your own expression of opinion in the Register, which furnished the occasion of my former communication. But, because I chose to demur to the *grounds* on which you took exception to the law, you must not understand me to regard the same law with entire complacency myself. By no means. I can never believe that any law which meets the disapprobation of the public, is a good law. The efficacy of law is not to be looked for in the pains and penalties it denounces, so much as in the support and approval of all good men. Whatever enactment fails to secure these, fails of the most essential element of moral power. It matters not whether it be intrinsically good or bad; it is enough to make it bad, whatever be its intrinsic excellence, that the community who witness its enforcement regards it as oppressive and wrong. What more is necessary to undermine the efficacy of any law, than to crown with applause those who resist its operations, and to canonize its victims as martyrs in a glorious cause!

It may be answered that no law *can* be intrinsically good, against which the voice of the people among whom it exists is so emphatically and so unanimously pronounced. This argument is certainly plausible, but by no means conclusive. The law of Congress providing for the

arrest and delivery of fugitive slaves is certainly a good law; yet throughout the length and breadth of the States for which it is designed, there is no division of opinion at all as to its wrongfulness. Those even who give it their support—politicians, editors, ministers of the Gospel—even judges from the bench—do so avowedly for no other reason but because it *is* a law, and not because they approve of its provisions. It is plain, then, that public sentiment, however decided, and however unanimous, is not always of necessity right; and that the old maxim, *VOX POPULI VOX DEI*, is to be taken with a large latitude for error.

I assume, then, that the “exculpation law” is not necessarily *malum in se*, because the people do not like it; but I admit that the tribunal of public opinion has certainly made it *malum prohibitum*, to the extent that no college Faculty can apply it without being immediately arraigned at that bar, as if they were the real offenders themselves. It fails, therefore, in what I have described to be the most essential element of moral power; it fails because the public, as well as every community of undergraduate students, are banded against it; and because applause instead of censure awaits every individual who sets it at defiance.

Has any thing been gained, then, by the attempt to substitute in colleges a method of legal investigation at variance with the principles of the honest old common law? I think not; yet while making this admission, I can see nothing morally wrong in the substitute. It is otherwise when we look at the subject in the light of expediency, or as a question of policy. I cannot but believe that



a great mistake was made by the originators of this innovation upon the time-honored principles and practices of penal jurisprudence. It may be very noble, and honorable, and magnanimous, and all that, for young men or old men to refuse to give testimony before any tribunal, the effect of which would be to expose their companions or friends to unpleasant consequences; but it appears to me that the court which claims the right to such testimony is not called upon to make any such admission. And if it does make such an admission, in regard to the open, honest and straightforward form of explicit statement, then I cannot see how it has any right to claim that a refusal to permit the truth to be extracted from the witnesses by indirection, is any the less noble or honorable or magnanimous. Both the old law and the substitute aim to fasten the offense upon the offender by the force of testimony. In the one case, the responsibility of this testimony is confined to a few; in the other it is divided among a greater number. But that which is mean, or contemptible, or wrong in any individual, is not the less so because a whole community share in the taint. A stain upon the honor is not a thing to be diluted by involving in its foulness the honor of many. And whenever any governing authority admits for a moment that it is mean, or that it is wrong, for any individual of the subject body to give such testimony as may be necessary to secure the ends of good government, it becomes self-divested of the most efficacious and almost the only means of ensuring the due observance of its laws.

The principle that no student may, *in any case what*

*ever*, without dishonor, give testimony to convict a fellow-student of a violation of college law, is at once mischievous and wrong; and one which the trustees and Faculties of colleges should be the very last to admit. No matter to what extent public sentiment may lend its sanction to this principle, the governors of colleges should set their faces resolutely against such a sentiment, and should endeavor, by all the means in their power, to correct it. Least of all should they allow themselves to be borne along with it, or commit an act so suicidal as to stamp with their own openly expressed approbation, a principle which denies to them a right absolutely vital to the administration of any government.

It is my candid opinion that our colleges have themselves chiefly to thank, for the extent to which their powers of government are paralyzed by the influence of surrounding public opinion. Till they, in so many words, relinquished the right to compel the witnesses to any flagrant offense to declare their knowledge, public sentiment did not so universally, so unanimously, or so sweepingly stigmatize the act of giving such testimony. Why should it? It is not dishonorable to testify in a civil court. Nay, even when the civil power has occasionally interfered to take the administration of justice out of the hands of college Faculties, the very same young men who assumed to be unable to state the truth to their academical superiors without dishonor, have shown no hesitancy to give evidence before a jury—yet no one has thought the worse of them. It is no reply to say that the civil court may commit a witness for contumacy; and that

therefore he has no choice but to testify. We are talking now about a question of right and wrong—honor and dishonor; and if, instead of committing to prison, our courts, like those of the Inquisition, could apply the rack, even torture itself could not justify the disclosures demanded, if it is really wrong or dishonorable to make them.

But as it is usually true that there cannot be any widely spread or deeply rooted popular conviction, without some original basis of reason, to whatever extremes the conviction may have been carried which the basis will not justify, it is worth while to inquire out of what plausible, or even in their first application just, considerations, has grown the doctrine that no student may inculcate another student by his testimony, without dishonor. In the first place, then, students associated together in the same class, or in the same college, occupy to each other not only the relation of subjects to a common government, but that, to a certain extent, of members of the same family. And as in families mutual confidence is an unavoidable necessity, so the obligation to guard it inviolable is one which exists antecedently to and independently of promises. It is not voluntarily assumed, and it cannot be repudiated at the option of the individual. But, secondly, it often happens, if not usually, that none are witnesses of those violations of college laws which become the subject of subsequent inquiry, who are not themselves to a greater or less degree implicated in them; and hence, that the act of giving such testimony as may subject another to censure, betrays a seeming willingness to purchase immunity to one's self by treachery to a friend. Viewed in this

light, the act of testifying is especially odious; and to this case I propose to devote no attention.

But in regard to the *implied bond of confidence* between members of the student-body, common sense suggests that it is not and cannot be of the uncompromising nature of that which accompanies the family tie; while we cannot but call to mind that the civil power does not recognize even that as inviolable, when the public good requires that it should be set aside. The students of a college are by no means so compacted together that the private acts of each one are of necessity exposed to his companions. There does not, in other words, exist the forced confidence of the family; and the main argument in support of the inviolability of that confidence in this case falls to the ground. Yet, inasmuch as it is undesirable that, in a community of generous and impulsive young men, there should creep in any thing like a feeling of mutual suspicion, I would have it continue to be thought, as it is I believe pretty universally thought, among Faculty and students equally, that information privately volunteered by one student injurious to another, is entirely dishonorable, and ought to be discountenanced by the authorities, as well as frowned on by the students.

In many cases of disorder in college, not only are the great majority of the community unacquainted with the offenders—showing that no necessary confidence exists which is in the nature of things unavoidable—but, when it is otherwise, and when those who interrupt the good order of college force themselves upon the notice of their peaceably disposed companions, it not seldom happens that

strong displeasure is excited on the part of those whom they thus make the witnesses of their lawlessness. It is nothing short of an absurdity to say that persons who are thus not necessarily cognizant of infractions of order, or who when made acquainted with them, are made so against their will, shall be held bound to identify themselves with the offenders, and, no matter what may be the enormity of the offenses (and it is often great), shall actually themselves suffer the penalties due to the misdeed, rather than by their testimony permit the authorities to suppress the disturbances, and protect them in the enjoyment of their rights, and in the peaceful prosecution of their studies.

After what I have said, I suppose I need hardly tell you that, had I a system of law to prepare for a college about to go into operation, the "exculpation law" should form no part of my code. Neither would I commit the folly of requiring a Faculty to protect order and administer justice, without empowering that body to investigate most thoroughly every case in which neglect of discipline might endanger the preservation of the ends for which government is instituted. And in order that nothing might be wanting to their power in this respect, I would make it obligatory on every student to give evidence—not to individual officers in private—by no means—but to the entire governing body, when sitting as a court of inquiry, in regard to any breach of law which may have occurred in his presence, or to his knowledge personally obtained, no matter by whom committed. Should the student so interrogated refuse to reply, he could but be dismissed;



and that is the penalty which college Faculties are now compelled to inflict on innocent men, when they refuse to declare, under the "exculpation law," that they are innocent.

I am by no means sure that the doctrine I here avow will be a popular doctrine. I incline to think rather that it will be the very contrary. Since colleges themselves have done so much, in my honest belief, to aid in vitiating the public sentiment on this subject, I have little hope that the course which appears to me to be recommended by the plainest common sense, will meet for the moment the approbation of my fellow-citizens. I ask for no such immediate approval. I ask only that reflecting men shall turn over the subject in their minds, and come to no decision at all until after mature consideration. It is evident that difficulties environ it on every side. Experiment has satisfied me that there is no escape by endeavoring to go round about. In this case, as in most in which there is any thing serious to be hazarded, I believe that the safest course is to take the bull by the horns.

In concluding this letter, I would merely add that the modes of investigation of which I have been speaking, both that of the old colleges and its substitute which exists here, much as they are denounced and rarely as they are applied, have after all been productive of an amount of good seldom considered and difficult to be estimated, constituting as they do the most substantial guaranty for the maintenance of order and the supremacy of law. This point I shall further illustrate hereafter.

*University of Alabama, July 21, 1854.*

## LETTER III.

OBJECTION TO THE MORAL TENDENCIES OF THE "EXCULPATION LAW"  
CONSIDERED.—SUBSTANTIAL BENEFITS DERIVED FROM THE EXISTENCE  
OF LAWS TO COMPEL THE DISCLOSURE OF TRUTH.

ONE of the objections advanced by the Register against the particular law of this and other Southern colleges, which is known as the "exculpation law," I have thus far omitted to examine. I allude to the assertion that the mode of proceeding sanctioned by that law is "contrary to any considerate method of moral culture." Having frankly expressed my own very decided dissatisfaction with the law in question, on grounds of expediency and policy, I must still feel it to be my duty to defend it on those of morality.

I have shown that this law was adopted as a substitute for another, which other was supposed to press too harshly upon the delicate sense of honor of young men in Southern colleges. Hitherto the main, if not the sole, objection which has been alleged against it by the young men themselves and their friends, has been that it still oppressed them in the same point in which the former had been intolerable; that, in short, it was but a mode of obliging them to do indirectly, what the previously existing law required that they should do directly, viz. discover to the authorities the authors of any given violation of law. Whether or not the sentiment upon which this objection

is founded is worthy of the respect it has received, whether it is the offspring of a true or a false notion of honor, is a matter of no present importance; its existence is undeniable, and it has down to the present time constituted the entire basis of all the opposition which this unfortunate law has had to encounter. The objection of the Register is new; let us see if it is any more substantial. To me it appears to involve suppositions entirely incompatible with each other.

How it can rationally be maintained, for instance, that an individual whose sense of honor is so nice that he will not tell the truth, when called upon, lest he should implicate a companion, may yet not hesitate to tell a lie lest he should implicate himself, I am at a loss to comprehend. But should this phenomenon occur in an exceptional instance, how the whole body of the companions of such a recreant, should still feel bound, by the force of the sentiment above spoken of, to maintain their silence nevertheless, and even to give themselves up to martyrdom, in order to protect the mean-spirited delinquent in the enjoyment of the benefits of his falsehood, is still less conceivable. Can any thing be more certain than that public opinion would blast such a wretch, and drive him out from a community of honorable men? For, be it observed, the case in which an offense is known only to its perpetrator, is a case almost or quite without example in college; and I cannot conceive that there could be any such case possible, in which a Faculty would ever think of applying the "exculpation law" as a means of investigation. The language of the law itself, as I have cited it in a former communication,

forbids such a supposition; for it is there explicitly stated to be designed to discover the offender only when he is known to be one of several individuals distinctly designated. The offender is always, therefore, more or less generally known to the student-body; and in case of an act of moral turpitude like that supposed above, he could not fail to become at once known to the whole. No young man, after such an act, would be tolerated for a moment in college; he would be ostracized without a dissenting voice. Those who have had the slightest acquaintance with such communities know this; and I cannot but feel surprised that the editor of the Register should so soon have forgotten what his own observation as a student unquestionably taught him. But the "exculpation law" has not been assumed to exert any other demoralizing influence except that of holding out an encouragement to falsehood. What that encouragement can amount to, in the face of counteracting principles so efficient as those which I have just pointed out, I leave my readers to judge.

And here I might dismiss the subject were it not that the present objection, like those which I have heretofore disposed of, happens to lie with no less force against the old law—which I have shown to be the only alternative law—than it does against the present. Take the rule at Yale College, for instance, that the student shall testify to what he knows, let the evidence inculcate whom it may. A refusal to speak draws down the censure of the Faculty upon himself; a free declaration of the truth, criminales his fellow-student, and involves the witness in popular

odium. In this case, as in the former, at a *prima facie* view, it would appear that falsehood would save the witness from unpleasant consequences on either hand. He may testify, and so disarm the Faculty; but he may testify falsely, and so save his companion. What is to prevent his doing this? Nothing, but his own strength of principle, and that withering power of popular opinion in college, before which the deliberate liar cannot for one moment stand. Thus, whichever be the mode of investigation sanctioned by the laws of any college, the same temptation (if it is a temptation) to falsehood in the witness, equally exists; and the same powerful counter-influences co-exist with it, to neutralize its power to harm.

I asserted in my last communication that the college laws to which so much exception has been taken, have, notwithstanding, been productive, after all, of a great deal of good; and I promised further to illustrate this assertion. You will certainly not understand me to intend that they have effected this good by their frequent application; since I have distinctly admitted that they are seldom put actually in force without being attended by temporary injury to the institution which is compelled to fall back upon them. I maintain that such ought not to be the case; but I admit, as I have said before, that in the present morbid condition of public sentiment on the subject, such is, in point of fact, the unfortunate truth. The good which they do is therefore not to be measured by the amount of transgression which they punish, but by the much more considerable amount which they prevent.

As American colleges are organized to-day, the oppor-



tunities of the Faculty personally to know in what manner the time of the students is occupied, at all those hours in which recitations or lectures are not actually proceeding, are so extremely limited, as to be practically little better than none at all. Our collegiate system is an attempted imitation of that which was instituted at Oxford and Cambridge, by the monkish lecturers of the middle ages, founded mainly upon the principle of the monastery; but the imitation is unfortunately complete only in the least desirable of its features, while it is deficient in most of the safeguards originally designed to secure it against abuses. In those venerable universities of Great Britain just mentioned, every college is a quadrangle, securely walled in, with a janitor always at the door, and with a definite hour for shutting in the entire community by bar and bolt. Within the same architectural pile reside not only the governed, but all the members of the governing body, from the President (master) down to the numerous "fellows," one of whose duties it is to aid the authorities in the preservation of order. The whole college body, moreover, not only reside under one roof, but dine together at one table; so that, in all save the religious aspect, the distinguishing features of the monastic family are kept conspicuously prominent to this day.

It was not a very great undertaking for a body of governors possessed of advantages like those here described, to assume the responsibility of preserving good order among a body of students committed to their guardianship. With us in America the case is very different. Our college dormitories are erected in an isolated group, in the

midst of an open area. No officers, or only here and there a tutor, occupy rooms in these buildings by night; none in some instances even by day. No president or professor meets the students at a common table; nor do commons continue still to exist, in the majority of cases. No janitor marks, or can mark, who leaves the premises during the hours which the law devotes to study; still less, who steals away or returns at those unwarrantable hours of darkness when nearly every one of the offenses most ruinous to good order and most difficult to manage is usually perpetrated. Yet under all these disadvantages, the public demands of the Faculty of every American college that it shall govern to the exclusion of every other species of authority, and shall still govern well. The college is a sanctuary which the civil power may not invade. It is an *imperium in imperio* within whose confines no municipal functionary may venture to set his foot. It is a community shut out with more than Japanese seclusion from the surrounding social world; and subject in its members to none of those restraining influences, by which public opinion bears upon the conduct of the individuals who make up the society to which man is born, and to which the student himself must at length return.

Such a community, so utterly exempt from every other species of control, it is which an American college Faculty are required to govern, and to govern well. Is it reasonable to expect them to do this, without arming them with the power? And is it not nonsense to talk of furnishing them with such arms, while they are denied the right to compel, under the highest penalties of the law,

the disclosure of truth, when the truth is necessary to the protection of order and the vindication of authority? I have asserted, and nobody has denied, that there have been yet discovered but two modes of exercising this compulsion. I have admitted with regret that neither of these modes finds favor with the public at large, whose interests are deeply involved in the success of colleges, and whose support ought always to be unhesitating and prompt on behalf of college authorities. But in spite of this I maintain that these laws have been productive of incalculable good, and that they are so still, at this very day.

They operate as a restraint of so powerful a nature, against pushing disorders to extremes, as to render such an event one of the rarest occurrences in college history. Unfrequently as they are applied, no student is ignorant either that they may be or that they inevitably will be so, whenever the necessity arises. Now, though no doubt it is a glorious fate, and one attended with much applause of friends, to say nothing of an almost inevitable newspaper apotheosis, to perish (academically) in the fires of college martyrdom; it is, nevertheless, not a fate which is spontaneously courted. No species of martyr—not even the Christian—is usually such from absolute preference or choice. And should the unbiassed testimony of young men themselves, who have had the largest experience in this way, be taken, I have no doubt whatever that it would be found to accord in the main with the view expressed by the elder Weller of *matrimony*, viz. that it is a very fine thing no doubt, “but whether it is worth while

to go through so much to gain so little, is perhaps more than can be said for it."

As a general rule, it may be remarked that the student finds college life agreeable. There is a sort of indescribable fascination about the microcosm of which it makes him a member. There is a charm in the ties to which it introduces him, and a fervor unfelt in later years, in the friendships which in the yet unchilled warmth of his youthful feelings it leads him to form. When, in the regular progress of events, the inevitable hour approaches which is to dissolve this dreamy episode of his existence, he feels a pang, deep and real as that of the exile who steps on board the bark which is to bear him from his native land forever. Exceptions may—such undoubtedly do—exist; I speak of the great majority. And I say that a life so charming will not on slight occasion be voluntarily self-terminated!

I take no account here, at all, of the deep and earnest interest which many—possibly most—take in the intellectual pursuits to which their college life is devoted. I say nothing of the firm conviction and just appreciation of the value of the opportunities which they enjoy, for self-formation, and preparation to grapple with the realities of life, by which the minds of all thoughtful young men are impressed in the midst of the priceless advantages here surrounding them. These are benefits which no man of sense will lightly relinquish, however ardent and impulsive the fires of youth may make him. But I say that, when to these weighty considerations are added the peculiar charm of student life, of which I have more particu-

larly spoken above, the inducement to avoid acts which may raise, and to suppress practices which may provoke, issues which, however attended with temporary eclat, must necessarily terminate disastrously to the student at last, is scarcely deficient in a single element of completeness. It is thus that the laws of which I have been speaking, exert a happy influence in spite of their unpopularity; while, were no such laws in existence, American colleges, as at present organized, would possess no guaranty that their tranquillity would remain undisturbed for a single day.

*University of Alabama, July 26, 1854.*



## LETTER IV.

DIFFICULTY OF THE POSITION OF COLLEGE OFFICERS AS GOVERNORS.—  
PERSONAL QUALITIES ESSENTIAL TO THEIR SUCCESS.—PRINCIPLES OF  
ACTION BY WHICH THEY SHOULD BE GUIDED.

To what I have already said as to the necessity for the existence of a substantial guaranty for the preservation of good order in institutions organized as are, for the most part, the colleges of this country at present, I have nothing further to add. But having more than once alluded to the evidence of an evil or defect inherent in the system itself—evidence which cannot be evaded or impugned—it might be expected that I should point out this defect and endeavor to suggest a remedy. That is a part of my purpose, but I am not quite yet prepared to come to the point. I have discussed but a portion of the evidence by which the existence of the evil is manifested. There remains still more behind.

Before giving further thought to that matter, however, permit me to call the attention of the reflecting public to the difficulty and delicacy of the position in which all college officers, under the existing system, are placed; and the great need which they have, when they faithfully discharge their duty, of being sustained by the approbation of the wise and thinking; since it is vain for them to look, when it is most to be desired, for that of the masses, who are too apt to judge without consideration, and are predis-

posed to condemn (as I have already shown) the only basis on which a stable college government can be erected. While matters proceed smoothly and the penal law slumbers, it is possible that those who happen to be at the head of affairs may receive higher commendation than they really deserve; and that without possessing uncommon qualities as governors of youth, they may yet be reputed to possess them. But let disorders arise, and let it become necessary to resort to measures of extremity to suppress them, and it will presently be manifest that no prudence, no forbearance, no wisdom, can save the best men from the much evil-speaking which the popular dislike of the system they administer is sure to draw down upon them.

While this faulty system continues, then, will it ever be possible so to conduct the government of any college, as to avoid altogether the recurrence of scenes like that through which the University of Alabama has recently passed, and which never fail to give a shock to the prosperity of the institution in which they occur, from which it requires a sensible time to recover? So long as human nature remains what it is, the answer to this question must, I fear, be negative. For in order that the possibility may exist, it is necessary that a government should be so wise and so prudent and so benignant, as by its moral power alone to accomplish all the ends which laws are enacted to secure. And such a government, by the terms of our supposition, must not be merely temporary—as may well happen under now and then a preëminently gifted head—but permanent, under a succession of rulers. This

is more than can be reasonably expected. Yet the fact that the strong arm of the law is not oftener invoked is evidence that college officers, as a class, do in fact possess a large share of those qualities which render law unnecessary, and to the presumed possession of which they owe in a considerable measure, their selection for the posts which they fill. Persons unaccustomed to reflect upon this subject, may imagine that it is a very simple thing to discharge at once faithfully and acceptably the delicate responsibilities resting upon a member of the government of a college. There is no difficulty in showing how great is the mistake committed by such.

It is not enough that a man be a good man in order that he may succeed as a governor of youth. The very best of men may make the worst possible of governors. Good men act from convictions of duty; and when once their course is chosen, the *mens conscia recti* not only sustains them in it, but forces them to cling to it, whatever may be the consequences. How important, then, that a man should be wise as well as good—that his judgment should be as sound as his purposes are upright and his principles pure! But wisdom and goodness combined are still insufficient to guaranty the success of a college governor. Rectitude of intention and soundness of judgment may lead to a correct decision as to what the exigencies of a particular case demand; but absolutely the same measure in the hands of two different men may be put into force with results very unequally successful. In college as in family government it is manner no less than substance which secures subordination, and determines com-

pliance with the requirements of authority. This consideration is of the very highest importance. I propose to inquire, therefore, more positively, what are the qualities which a member of the government of a college ought to possess?

Before descending to particulars, I may say in general terms, that these qualities ought to be such as, in their combination, to impress all whom his authority reaches with the full conviction that toward them personally he has but one feeling, which is a feeling of kindness; and that in whatever he does affecting them he has but one motive, which is to do them good. It unfortunately too often happens that an impression the very opposite of this springs up and becomes permanently established among a body of students. I have known this to occur in reference to men who certainly lacked none of the qualities which might have enabled them to command a more desirable reputation; but who failed to appreciate the great importance of establishing their rule on the basis of the affections. I am aware that it is hardly with reason to be supposed that any college officer can entertain toward the students whom he instructs any feelings but those of the utmost kindness and good will. The question is not, however, a question of fact on the one side, so much as one of conviction on the other; it is not whether the officer is, but whether he is believed to be, the student's friend. A conviction of this kind once established in his favor throughout the little community to which he belongs, arms such a man with a power to control, which all the terrors of the law could not otherwise give him.

But it may be asked, How can one who from the necessities of his situation must sometimes admonish, sometimes censure, sometimes perhaps even subject to punishment, some of those who are placed under his guardianship, how can he under such circumstances secure that universal and eminently desirable confidence, which I have represented to be so important an element of his success? In reply, I must refer to that distinction which I have made above, in regard to *manner* in carrying out measures of government. College officers may censure and punish without destroying the confidence of those who incur their displeasure in the sincerity of their desire to promote in the highest degree the welfare of all subject to their government, or without shaking the belief of the culprit himself that they entertain toward him personally no feelings but those of friendship and kindness, even while they censure. An assertion of this kind may be best established by illustration. The venerable Dr. Day, of New Haven, still lives, beloved of hundreds whose youthful indiscretions he censured, whose youthful follies he rebuked, and whose youthful passions he restrained and controlled. For half a century he was an officer of the largest college in the United States, and for thirty years of that period he occupied the presidency. During his connection with the college more than four thousand students were graduated, and there were not less than two thousand more who did not complete the collegiate course. Out of all the great number who thus came in contact with this admirable man and faultless college officer, I never heard of one who did not always regard him with feelings of confidence and



affection; nor even now do I meet an alumnus of that institution, however long graduated, whose heart does not turn back, like my own, with a glow of grateful remembrance to the guide and friend of his early years. The thing, therefore, is practicable. What, then, are the personal qualities and what are the principles of action which may enable any officer to realize it in his own case?

To speak of the second point first. Confidence is a feeling which cannot exist all upon one side, any more than love; nor can a college officer command the confidence of students, without reposing, or at least seeming to repose, a correspondent confidence in them. A principle of action, therefore, from which no wise college officer will depart, is invariably to treat the student as if he believed him to intend rightly. In nine cases out of ten, he will be able to do this from conviction; for, manifestly, as a general rule, the student must and will intend rightly; and if in the tenth case circumstances arise to create a doubt of this, he will at once frankly state these circumstances, and afford the opportunity for an explanation. He will, in short, upon this point have no concealments, nor allow his manner to betray any thing dubious. By adopting this as a principle he will, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, be met in a spirit of equal frankness, and will remove the strongest of the temptations by which youth are led to engage in violations of the rules of order. To attempt deliberately to deceive him, or to impose upon his confidence, will be regarded as an act partaking of the nature of treachery—the most odious

of all species of moral delinquency in the eyes of generous young men.

It will be another principle of action which a wise governor of youth will observe, to resort to no means of seeking to learn in what manner the hours of young men are employed, during which his personal observation cannot reach them, except such as are fair, above-board, and distinctly avowed. This principle would be but a necessary consequence of the former, provided that were adopted in full sincerity of purpose, and not merely in outward show. But there is an element of suspicion innate in some natures, which will not let them fully confide in those around them, and least of all, perhaps, in those who are subject to their authority. Such persons, though from convictions of policy they may endeavor to wear an unsuspecting front, find it sometimes impossible to resist the temptation to listen to information coming to them through devious channels, or occasionally even from putting in train devices of vigilance which differ little in principle from deliberate and systematic espionage. It is to be doubted whether any thing so learned is ever productive of any substantial benefit to either party; but it is quite certain that if the means employed become known or even suspected, the moral power of the governor who uses them is broken forever. Between equals, nothing is more true than that none confide in those who refuse to render confidence in turn; between subordinate and superior, this is, if possible, still more emphatically the case. It would be a curious, and at the same time an instructive inquiry, were it practicable, to ascertain how many of the difficulties, great

and small, which have arisen to mar the peace of colleges, have sprung from the irritation which a sensitive disposition never fails to experience at the impression conceived, whether justly or unjustly, by its possessor, that his footsteps have been dogged, his private acts scrutinized, and his careless and unguarded expressions noted down to be used to his disadvantage. Conceived, I say, whether justly or unjustly; but in the shape which the impression too often takes, and which, not to mince matters, I purposely clothe in the language which the exasperated student himself is wont to employ, there can be no question that it is always unjust. Yet this circumstance renders it none the less prolific of evil. Upon him who entertains it, it exercises all the power of an odious reality to incense and inflame; and even when full conviction does not attend it, it is so far from being the less irritating, that the angry youth is often only the more angry at the suggestion of a possible doubt. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, to avoid any thing which can furnish a basis, however shadowy, to impressions like these. Nor do I believe that college officers often err in this way. I believe that, with most, there is a frankness of real confidence manifested toward the students whom they meet, which engenders an equally unreserved reciprocation of the same feeling; and that the instances are rare indeed, in which the foundation of this desirable state of things is broken up by such measures of vigilance on the part of superiors, as are calculated to destroy that mutual kindness and good will, which are the firmest security for the stability of any government.

*University of Alabama, July 31, 1854.*

## LETTER V.

THE AMERICAN COLLEGE SYSTEM MAINLY DEPENDENT FOR ITS SUCCESSFUL OPERATION UPON THE PERSONAL QUALITIES OF DISPOSITION AND TEMPERAMENT OF THE MEN WHO CONDUCT IT,—INSECURITY ARISING FROM THIS CAUSE.—ENUMERATION OF THE MOST ESSENTIAL OF THE MORAL QUALITIES WHICH THE COLLEGE OFFICER SHOULD POSSESS.

I HAVE spoken of certain principles of action, the observance of which on the part of those who are charged with the government of young men, I consider to be essential to the permanent success of their rule. I am about to speak of certain positive qualities of disposition and temperament, which, in their very highest manifestations, are perhaps the gift of few, but of which the possession, in a degree greater than belongs to the generality of mankind, is apparently no less essential to the certain attainment of the ends of good government. Nor in doing this am I deviating from the main purpose I have in view in this series of articles, which is to demonstrate the existence of an imperfection in our college system as at present organized, in order that I may proceed to suggest what seems to me a simple and easy remedy.

I do not wish to anticipate, nor to take up things out of their natural order; yet since I have distinctly announced my ultimate design, it may not be amiss to say here, for the sake of preventing misconceptions, that what I have to propose is no great and sweeping change, no

suspicious or startling innovation. Neither the evil nor its remedy have any necessary connection whatever with the system of *instruction* now generally practiced in American colleges. The removal of that evil involves no derangement of that system, nor any injury to a single one of its important features. But of this, those who have patience to follow me to the end, will be able to judge in due time.

Meanwhile, if I show it to be a fact, that the successful operation of the existing system of government depends almost wholly upon the character of the men who administer it; and further, that the peculiar endowments which especially fit men for this difficult task, are in their fullest development rare, I shall have established *a priori*, what experience corroborates, that such a system is always insecure; and that, if this element of hazard admits of removal, the remedy ought to be applied.

The first trait of character which I regard as essential to the success of a college officer under our present system of government, is one in which few are found to fail; but which rather from its occasional predominance over the milder traits, gives sometimes something like a tone of harshness to the manner, which it were better to veil; and that is *firmness*. No government can succeed which fails to command respect, and no respect can be felt for a vacillating, timorous, or irresolute superior. The hand must be at once strong and steady which holds the rein over the giddy impulses of heedless or undisciplined youth; nor will any be found more ready to admit this necessity than those, or at least the majority of them (for most



young men are ingenuous) who themselves need the restraint. But upon this point it is unnecessary to multiply words, since the absence of the quality under consideration is rarely one of the faults of an American college officer.

It may be occasionally otherwise in regard to the quality of which I am next to speak, and of which the importance is always most felt in connection with the last. I mean a *mildness of manner*, which divests the firmest government of every appearance of sternness, and clothes the severest decrees of justice with the exterior of kindness. The popular appreciation of the value of such a union of qualities is manifested in the frequent application of the maxim, which, with aphoristic brevity, associates them, as the "*suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*" Napoleon observed of the French, that they needed for their control "a hand of iron in a glove of velvet." One of his subjects, who probably knew by experience the feeling of the hand, remarked, that the great monarch never failed of the iron grasp, but often forgot to put on the glove. The observation of the French emperor is not inapplicable to the impulsive youth of our American colleges; and while I yield to no one in my conviction of the indispensable necessity of firmness and decision in college government, I sincerely believe that an exterior of unvarying mildness on the part of those who administer such a government, is a means of preventing evil, more efficacious than all the penalties of the law put together. If youthful passions, prompt to effervesce, are easily excited, so are they quite as easily soothed; and the fable of the sun and the wind,

though it symbolizes a truth as universal as human nature, is nowhere more strikingly illustrative than within the walls of a college.

Much, also, of the success of college government depends upon the exercise of a *wise discretion* by the officer, in regard to the use he may make of his own powers. Because he may punish, it does not follow that he always should punish, whenever occasion arises. It does not even follow that he should always betray his knowledge of the offense, farther than to the offender himself. By privately admonishing the individual of the impropriety of his conduct, and pointing out to him the danger to which he has exposed himself, much more good may often be accomplished, in the way of prevention and reformation, than by all the disgrace attendant on public rebuke and censure. When such a course is possible, it is obviously the wisest, as it is the kindest and most forbearing. But such a mode of proceeding may not always answer the purpose; and on this account it is, that no quality of mind is of higher value in the officer than a clear and discreet judgment. Censures, penalties, punishments of all kinds, are unavoidable necessities, arising out of the imperfection of human nature; but as their main design, in human institutions, is the prevention of offenses, so the less they are resorted to, consistently with the attainment of this end, the better.

It is not an unfrequent occurrence, that a young man in college feels himself aggrieved by something which has occurred between him and his instructor. He may imagine that a fair hearing has not been given him in the reci-

tation room; or he may interpret in an injurious sense, words addressed to him in the hearing of his class; or he may believe that he has not been rated as high, on the record, as his performances merit; or some other cause of dissatisfaction may arise, to induce him to remonstrate or complain. Nor should the instructor turn from such representations contemptuously away. *Patience* should be one of his marked characteristics; and he will probably never find it more thoroughly tried than on occasions of this kind. For if he possess the qualities I have already enumerated, especially the last two named, he will have been steadily laboring against the very errors which he sees thus imputed to him, and he must feel that his intention is certainly wronged, whatever impression his words or acts may have conveyed. But this must not provoke him to listen any the less patiently, or to explain any the less circumstantially, the occurrences out of which the dissatisfaction has grown; nor if he pursues such a course will he usually fail to dispel the momentary chagrin, and re-establish the feeling of confidence and kindness which it had temporarily disturbed.

I need not say how important it is that the college officer, whether in dispensing censure or praise, should be actuated by no feeling of favor on the one hand, or of prejudice on the other. There exists no higher necessity in the civil courts, that justice should be meted out with severe *impartiality*, than that the same principle should preside over all the awards of college authority. No more frequent charge is advanced against the officers of our literary institutions, than that they are partial. The

partiality alleged to exist, is more commonly one of favor than the contrary; but we hear it sometimes asserted, nevertheless, that the prejudices of officers blind them to the merits of certain individuals, or lead them to exercise toward such an undue severity. As a general rule, it may be said that these imputations are unfounded. The disregard with which, often as they are made, they are treated by the public, shows that they are considered to be, as on the slightest estimate of probabilities they must appear, entirely baseless. They point out, nevertheless, a quality which it is absolutely indispensable that the college officer should possess; while they admonish us that it is not the possession alone, but the reputation of possessing (I refer to the reputation within the college itself), which the judicious officer will aim to secure.

It may be observed that the most cautious wisdom will not always preserve to the most judicious college officer, the invariable and unfailing good-will of those whom it is his duty to control. Sudden ebullitions of temper on the part of excitable young men, may prompt them to hasty words or acts, well suited to subvert the equanimity of any one, however by nature imperturbable. Yet the imperturbability of the college officer should be superior to all such provocations. He should tranquilly suffer the moment of excitement to pass by; and allow the offender, under the influence of the self-rebuke usually consequent upon reflection, to make the reparation which the case demands. To allow himself to become excited, is but to widen the breach and render it irreparable; when but a single consequence can possibly follow. He who

has set at defiance the authorities of the college, or treated its representative with gross disrespect, can no longer remain a member of the institution. The necessity, therefore, of *great power of self command* on the part of a college officer is obvious; for though the occasions which may severely try it can never be frequent, yet the want of it, whenever they occur, is a misfortune for which nothing can adequately compensate.

I have but one thing more to add. To a wise college governor, *the word INEXORABLE will be unknown*. The faults of youth are usually faults of impulse rather than of deliberate purpose. They evince not so much settled wickedness as thoughtless folly, or giddy recklessness of disposition. Few so immature in years as are the majority of college youth, are already entirely abandoned; while it is a fact almost without exception, that those among every body of students who have passed the climacteric which separates them from boyhood, have ceased any longer to require the restraining influence of college governments. The culprits, then, who are brought to the bar of college justice, are almost invariably boys, whom vice has not had time utterly to subjugate, and whose consciences are not yet callous to every appeal. From such, when they repent, a considerate governor will be slow to turn unfeelingly away; nor while there remains room for pardon will he hesitate to extend it to them. He will remember, that on his decision perhaps hangs the entire destiny of the offender, for this world if not for another; and no considerations but such as involve the highest interests of the entire community over which he is placed as a guardian, will



prevent his accepting the evidence of sincere repentance as an expiation of the most serious fault.

But were all college officers gifted in the highest degree with the qualities which I have enumerated, I do not know that it would follow that troubles would be impossible. I only know that the non-existence of these endowments, to at least a pretty large extent, leaves open a wide door for their entrance. It is true, therefore, that the existing college system is dependent for its successful operation, in a very eminent degree, upon the kind of men to whom its administration is entrusted; and this fact, if it inheres in the system only in consequence of the existence in the same system of features which are inessential to the great purposes of education, and which admit of easy removal, is an evil the more to be deplored, because it is unnecessary.

*University of Alabama, Aug. 5, 1854.*

## LETTER VI.

OBJECTIONS OF THE "REGISTER" TO THE DAILY VISITATION OF ROOMS, CONSIDERED.—DESIGN OF THIS VISITATION.—REASONS FOR MAINTAINING THE USAGE.—SOCIAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN OFFICERS AND STUDENTS OUGHT TO BE CULTIVATED.

I AM now prepared to return to the consideration of a college usage to which you have raised serious objections, but which I dismissed, in the commencement of this discussion, with no other remark than that its prevalence is co-extensive with that of the system itself:—I allude to the practice made obligatory on the officers of colleges to visit, from time to time, the rooms of the students, during the hours set apart for study.

You object to visitation mainly upon two grounds: First, that it is an invasion of the natural right of the student to privacy; and, secondly, that its object is to obtain, by sly and stealthy approaches, a knowledge of such unlawful practices as would not probably be reached by fair and honorable means. I do not say that you charge, in so many words, premeditated and systematic meanness on all college officers, but this charge is certainly contained, by implication, in your objections to the practice under consideration.

Now, in what sense, I ask, is any natural right of the student invaded by subjecting him to this liability to visi-

tation? The college receives him as a student, only on the condition that he consents to yield up a material portion of his time to the direction of the authorities. These authorities, in order that there may be no possible mistake as to how far this condition extends, and as to what they claim as their own, have specified, in printed rules, a copy of which is furnished to each individual affected by them, precisely what hours of the twenty-four shall not be private to the student; but may be, if they so require it (and they occasionally do) passed uninterruptedly in their immediate presence. The officer who is to meet a class at a certain hour, for recitation or lecture, may require their attendance upon him, if he pleases, during all the preceding hours of preparation. I have often done this. On special occasions, I have been repeatedly requested to do it by the classes themselves. But in case this right is waived, as it usually is, and study is prosecuted in the student's own apartment, the law recognizes no privacy whatever during the period allotted to study; and it provides for the visitation of the rooms, as a practical standing assertion of the fact that his time is in no sense whatever the property of himself, but that it belongs to the authorities to dispose of, absolutely as they please. Beyond these hours, thus set apart for university purposes, the system of visitation does not extend; and, in modern colleges, never has extended. Out of this time, so long as no disorder occurs to require interposition, the privacy of the dormitories is as much respected by the authorities, as that of the Grand Turk's seraglio by all good Musselmans.

Now, here you have the whole system in a nutshell—

its original design and its basis of right and reason. Considered from this point of view, what can you find in it exceptionable? Nevertheless, I am sure that the officers of colleges—those of this college at least—are not tenacious of this practice. They would be willing to abolish it to-morrow, if they were not convinced that the students would never be permanently contented under such a change. This doubtless will surprise you, and you will beg leave to record your emphatic dissent; but we *know* what we say, because we have tried the experiment. For a year or two—I am unable to say how long—while our numbers were fewer than they have since been, we practiced no visitation. We resumed the practice at the request of the students themselves. Those who desired to study, and these are always a majority, found their privacy so encroached upon by those who did not, as seriously to annoy them, and obstruct the prosecution of their regular pursuits. The nuisance continued to grow, with growing numbers, until it became intolerable; and the result was what I have stated. And so I do not doubt that it would be again, were we to discontinue the practice once more. I do not suppose that the evil would instantaneously reappear. Habits of lounging from room to room and wasting time in profitless trivialities, do not grow up in a day; but that they will grow up, where there is no check to prevent their development, in the midst of any community embracing a hundred or two of young men brought together at random, I believe to be as certain as that human nature always remains the same. The check afforded by the system of visitation is slight. It creates

only a liability on the part of individuals to be found, more or less frequently, inattentive to their own proper business, and interrupting their neighbors in the prosecution of theirs; but while it is inadequate to the complete prevention of such irregularities, as every plan short of constant supervision must be, it is efficient enough to prevent their becoming excessive. Still, I repeat, the Faculty of this institution regard the system of visitation so much more in the light of a favor shown to the students, than in that of an oppressive molestation, that, I have no question at all, they would abolish it without hesitation, were the majority of the fathers who have sons here, or even of the sons themselves after carefully considering the subject on all sides, to desire it.

Your second objection, I am disposed to believe, you will, upon reflection, retract. I know that it is not very uncommon for young men, when under the influence of excitement caused by some act of college discipline, to say things very disparaging to those whose only fault is, that, often with pain to themselves, they have faithfully discharged their duty; but surely, a gentleman who knows the world so well as the editor of the "Register," cannot for a moment believe that an individual fit to occupy the distinguished post of a professor of elegant letters or of the liberal arts, would be capable of practices which would make him unworthy to share the society of honorable men. Upon this objection I shall therefore dwell no longer than to express my regret, that imputations which may easily be pardoned to hasty and inconsiderate youth, prompted by excited feeling, should have found a place in



a journal, so widely circulated and so influential as the "Register."

In dismissing this topic, I would remark, that the duty of official visitation, necessary as under the existing college system it seems to be, is one which peculiarly tests some of those qualities of the college officer of which I made mention in my last communication, and especially those which relate to *manner*. Consideration for the student's necessary occupation will not ordinarily admit of more than a moment's delay during the visit to each room; and the extent of the round to be made admonishes the visitor that he must economize his own time. The brevity of the call, therefore, adds something to that tendency to stiffness which the consciousness of its official character is apt to impart to it. He who can discharge this duty so as invariably to give and receive pleasure at every repetition of it, must be considered to possess a temperament peculiarly adapted to the position he occupies. Yet the thing is not impossible. I have known it to be true of men who have been subjected to the test for years; and this I regard as an additional evidence that the system, however unlovely may be the colors in which you have painted it, is not in itself necessarily odious.

One additional remark in conclusion. While speaking of official visitation, I would express my belief that, if there were more unofficial visiting between officers and students than usually takes place in our colleges, the effect would be eminently beneficial. Let there be moments when the artificial relations of instructor and pupil shall be forgotten, or at least by common consent kept out of

sight; and there cannot fail to grow up a feeling of kindly personal interest between the parties, of wonderful efficacy in promoting the harmony and happiness of the entire community. On the part of officers, it is often difficult, or even impossible, to do in this way so much as they would; both because of the pressure of burthens public and private on their hands, and because of the large number of the young men between whom their attention must be divided; but they ought to invite and encourage the visits of students to themselves, so far as their engagements will allow; and I have no hesitation in saying, that they should reciprocate such visits whenever it may be in their power. It is my candid opinion that all the laws which were ever enacted for the good government of colleges, are weak and nugatory, compared with that boundless moral influence which it is possible for the individual officer to acquire, by winning the affections, instead of operating on the fears, of those whom he instructs. Perhaps there is no single means more effectual towards the accomplishment of this desirable end, than that he should manifest a prompt willingness to meet and reciprocate with them all the ordinary courtesies of life, in a spirit and with a manner which shall show that they are something more than empty forms.

*University of Alabama, Aug. 8, 1854.*

## L E T T E R   V I I .

NO VINDICATION OF THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF COLLEGE GOVERNMENT CAN BE UNIVERSALLY SATISFACTORY; BECAUSE, FIRST, NO SYSTEM CAN BE EQUALLY SUITED TO STUDENTS OF EVERY AGE; AND, SECONDLY, THE POPULAR IDEA OF THE COLLEGE STUDENT IS DRAWN FROM THE CLASS WHO NEED LEAST TO BE GOVERNED.

I HAVE examined those features of the system of government common to the colleges of this country, which have been made especially the subjects of your strictures. If I have not removed your objections to them, I have at least shown that they may be plausibly defended. I think I have shown that, so long as colleges are organized on the existing general plan, these features present nothing unreasonable; perhaps I may say, nothing unnecessary.

Now, were I to examine every other regulation connected with the government and discipline of colleges to which exception has been taken in any quarter, and were I to detail with like minuteness the reasons which have led to the introduction of each into the code of college law, I have no doubt that I should be able to make as good a case in every instance, as I have done in the one or two I have considered. I ought to be able to do so, for these regulations have not been the creation of a day, of a year, or even of a century. They rest upon no foundation of mere opinion or judgment—not even upon the opinions

or judgments, uncorrected by experience, of the wisest men; but they are results wrought out by actual experiment, and by the comparison of different methods during the course of several centuries.

Yet after all, it cannot be denied that the most unanswerable vindication of the existing system of college government, leaves upon the minds of many, an unsatisfied impression, and that the reply will continually recur—"But you offend the self-esteem, you mortify the pride of character, you wound the innate feeling of personal dignity, in a sensitive young man, by subjecting him to a code of regulations fit only for the government of boys." True, we do this; if a young man, whose maturity of years and fixedness of principle enable him to be a law to himself, chooses, on joining our community, to regard our system of law as having been established expressly for him. But it is not for such that we legislate; nor is it just to denounce our rules as oppressive, because there are some individuals for whom they are unnecessary. The difficulty is to induce the public—even the most sensible part of the public—to reflect, that all laws must be made to meet the cases of those who most need restraint, and not of those who need it least.

I have already, in a former letter, mentioned the fact, that the individual students who become subjects of college discipline, are almost invariably boys. Our rules allow us to receive candidates for admission at the early age of fourteen; and very many enter below sixteen. On the other hand, not a few have attained, or nearly attained, their majority, before becoming members of col-

lege; and the consequence is, that we have a community very heterogeneous in character, very unequal in power of self-command, very widely different in degree of manliness, very unfit to be all subjected to the same uniform regimen. In the younger classes we find usually a majority who have come directly from the schools, where their conduct has been subjected to the restraint of immediate and constant supervision. Such, even if they possess the power have not yet acquired the habit of self-control; and the almost irresistible propensity of juvenile nature to avail itself without consideration of every accidental opportunity to give way to frolic mirthfulness, on the slightest relaxation of the severe vigilance of school supervision, is carried into the college, and is not laid aside until familiarity with freedom neutralizes the temptation to extravagance. Life in college, indeed, very rapidly transforms the boy into the man. In such communities, especially where the numbers are large, the members of the several classes are almost as clearly distinguished from each other by outward signs of manner and deportment, as by reference to the official register; and acts of thoughtless frivolity, which in the earlier years are by no means rare, become almost unknown to the later.

It is a very great disadvantage of college government, that it can provide but one system of discipline for all variety of subjects; and that consequently, the stringent system which the more volatile—those in whom the boy spirit still predominates—require, is felt to be unreasonably oppressive and galling by the graver class who disdain even the suspicion of puerility. The popular



idea of the college student is drawn much more from the latter class than from the former; and, hence, such strictures as those of the "Register" upon the visitation of rooms, carry with them an appearance of weight and reason which they would hardly possess were it remembered, that this system does not exist for the supervision and restraint of those who need no restraint, but on account of those others who do need it, yet cannot possibly be separately reached. And the same might be said of nine out of ten of the rules existing in colleges for the regulation of the student's conduct.

It is a curious fact that, while the popular idea of the college student at the present day invests him very much with the character of a man—though many individual students are in fact but boys,—in the early history of colleges, both in this country and abroad, the case was completely the reverse, and the college or university student was looked upon and treated as a mere school-boy. It was this fact, indeed, which, if it did not determine the erection of colleges and halls in the universities, at least suggested the form of their organization. The Universities of England taught only, and assumed no responsibility for the deportment or morals of the students. The lecturers—ultimately styled professors—did nothing, and do nothing to this day, but lecture; they heard no recapitulations of the subjects by the students—that is, no recitations. But boy learners require both moral control and mental drilling. The colleges and halls were erected to subserve both these purposes. In these establishments the students were boarded, lodged, and kept under close

supervision. They were each governed by a master, assisted by one or more tutors as necessity might require. It was the business of the tutor to see that the youths duly attended the lectures, and to interrogate them upon what they heard—that is, to hear them recite. It was also his business to give them religious instruction, and to “do all that in him lay to render them comformable to the Church of England.” In addition to this, he had the further rather troublesome charge of “containing his pupils within statutory regulations in matters of external appearance, such as their clothes, boots, and hair,” with the somewhat unpleasant liability, in case his unmanageable urchins evaded his vigilance, expressed in the following clause—“Which if the pupils are found to transgress, the tutor, for the first, second, and third offense, shall forfeit six and eight pence, and for the fourth, shall be interdicted from his tutorial functions.”\* Corporal punishment was inflicted, says Sir Charles Lyell, in the English Universities, so late as the time of Milton. The same appears to have been true in the early years of Harvard and Yale, in this country. Down to the commencement of the present century, the fagging system survived in both those colleges—a system which rendered the student, during his freshman year, the drudge of his fellow-students above him; and to quite as late a period, the whole body of the students were compelled to observances towards the college officers, which would now be held to be degrading, and could only then consist with the idea

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\* Sir William Hamilton's Discussions on Philosophy.

that the student is a mere school-boy. In those primitive days, nice questions of casuistry, as to how far a student may or may not, by his testimony, rightfully or honorably criminate his fellow, were unknown; but the youth who refused to testify—if that phenomenon ever occurred—was neither remonstrated with nor dismissed, but simply, I suppose, “licked!” However, we have changed all that, and very properly; but so far has the change gone, at the present day, that nearly all attempts on the part of college Faculties to use coercion of any kind, if not resisted *in limine*, are at least met with remonstrance and complaint.

From the foregoing statements, it is apparent that the American colleges have assumed to themselves the double duty, which, some centuries ago in England, was divided between college and University—the duty of instruction and that of government. It is true that the English colleges have done the same at Oxford and Cambridge, by that gradual and systematic usurpation by which the tutor has supplanted the professor in his functions, and by which the college has substantially superseded the University. But in undertaking this two-fold responsibility in this country, we have failed as I have heretofore shown, to copy from our models the devices by which they secure the ability to discharge it. Our college officers neither live in the same building nor eat at the same table with the students, nor are the premises shut in by walls, or secured by locks and bolts. In the absence of these material safeguards, we have spun around our colleges a cob-web of words; instead of imme-

diate and constant supervision, we have substituted law; instead of bolts and bars, we have invoked penalties; instead of substantial stone and mortar, we have built our reliance upon a barricade of paper. What wonder that the merest breath sometimes bears down the barrier before it!

*University of Alabama, Aug. 10, 1854.*

## LETTER VIII.

AMERICAN COLLEGES ASSUME TOO GREAT A RESPONSIBILITY.—THE COLLEGE SYSTEM OF THE COUNTRY, CONSIDERED AS A SYSTEM OF MORAL TRAINING, IS A FAILURE.—IS THERE ANY REMEDY?

THOUGH as yet I have not explicitly stated what I believe to be the defect of our present college system, out of which, in spite of all the prudence, caution, and foresight of the wisest officers, we may fairly expect trouble more or less frequently to arise, my last letter, I presume, can have left little doubt as to my impressions upon that point. But, as I wish to be distinctly understood, I shall not leave my opinion to be a mere matter of inference. The simple truth is here—*American colleges assume a responsibility which they have not the power adequately to discharge.* They undertake not merely to train the mind and inform the understanding, but also to regulate the conduct and protect the morals. This great weight of responsibility was without doubt originally incurred in full view of its magnitude, and of deliberate purpose; but it was not incurred without a careful provision of the means which might render its fulfillment a possibility. In its origin, the college was strictly a family, and its government was a parental despotism. Constant and immediate supervision, locks, bolts, and bars,



and obligatory observances which would now be called degrading, stood, as I have shown, in place of our cobweb laws; and for penalties, there were personal restraint, privation of enjoyments, cumulation of tasks, and even that terror of childhood, the rod itself. The system, in its inception, was evidently designed for boys and none else; though it must be confessed that, at that primitive period, not only did boyhood cover a much larger space in human life than it does at present, but all ages submitted without murmuring to restraints which would not now be tolerated for a moment. Holmes, in three lines, gives us a happy idea of the state of things existing in those days:

“The people were not democrats then,  
They did not talk of the rights of men,  
And all that sort of thing.”

Sir William Hamilton tells us that colleges and halls for lay students were created “in imitation of the *Hospitia* which the religious orders established in the university towns, for those of their members who were attracted, as teachers or learners, to those places of literary resort.” It does not appear that, in the original design of the universities of Europe, whether British or continental, any control of the conduct or regulation of the morals of the students was contemplated at all. The researches of the writer just cited, make it evident that the exposures were very peculiar, which rendered the institution of some moral safeguards necessary. When we consider what precisely were these exposures, as they are described in an extract from the Cardinal de Vitry, which Sir William

quotes but does not venture to translate, we cannot without a smile endeavor to imagine the holy horror with which those respectable ecclesiastics who founded the colleges of Paris, must have regarded a proposition to give to them such a constitution as that of Yale, or Harvard, or Princeton, or the University of Alabama. In the view of those men, this constitution could not but have rendered these exposures tenfold more dangerous. In professing to throw up moral defenses around the youth committed to their charge, they aimed at realities and not at shadows; in place of empty prohibitions, they erected physical barriers; and they provided against transgression by the simple expedient of rendering it impossible. It is no part of my business to prove that they did not err in one direction as widely as we do in the other; it is enough that I show, that, having a definite object in view, they adopted means to accomplish it; while we, with the same object, adopt next to none at all. We have abandoned supervision—we have discarded the family arrangement—we have given up the college cloisters to the almost exclusive control of their juvenile occupants. No Cerberus in the form of a janitor guards the college gates—no blank, uncompromising wall shuts in the academic court—no “fat professor or lean and ghostly tutor” (I think I quote you correctly) glides along the passages—no shooting-bolt, as tolls the college curfew, obstructs all further commerce with the external world. In place of all these securities, we have introduced a single substitute: it is *law*; and it has failed. I do not find especially the evidence of this failure in acts of insubordination, of

which—of such at least as are serious—the occurrence is after all but rare; but I find, in my own personal experience as a student, and in my observation both as a student and as an officer, conclusive proof that the system of government existing in American colleges, considered as a system of moral restraint, is all but worthless. My own convictions would justify me in using even stronger language than this. To me it has all the character of an ascertained fact, a matter of immediate knowledge and not of inference or information, that initiation into the charmed collegial circle is, morally, rather a release from old restraints, than an imposition of new ones. The public eye no longer rests upon the neophyte; public opinion no longer encourages, intimidates, or guides him; he is, except for flagrant crime, substantially absolved from allegiance to the laws of the land; and, between him and the only authority which he does acknowledge, is interposed that unwritten “higher law” of colleges, the law of the *Burschenschaft*, which enables him to defy investigation, and baffle inquiry.

Is it reasonable to expect good to grow out of a system like this? And if young men emerge spotless from the ordeal of a college life, is it not plain that they do so, not in consequence of the system, but in spite of it? Vice and crime would be unknown but for temptation; temptation would usually be powerless but for opportunity. Youthful passions rarely fail to find the first; the American college system furnishes the second in its amplest form.

This system also, is such as to open to evil example a

field for the most powerfully pernicious influence. If Satan, in his fall, drew after him a third part of the host of Heaven, much more is it to be expected that one of his ministers on earth may lead astray no small proportion of a community of inconsiderate and impulsive young men. Social sympathy—the feeling of companionship—will often carry a youth along, where his conscience forbids him to go. If he betrays his scruples, he soon learns to blush with mortification at the ridicule they excite. What should naturally follow, but that he should presently cease to have a conscience at all? Truly it seems to me, that, had it been the original design of the college system, instead of guarding the morals of young men, to expose them to danger, and instead of watching over them, to abandon them to the protection of chance, a scheme more happily devised to effect this object could not have been sketched out. It has maintained its ground to this day through an unquestioning veneration of antiquity, though every feature that recommended it to the men of olden time, by whose wisdom it was planned, has long since been abandoned. Could now all recollection of the past be effaced, and could the question be brought up before the present generation as one entirely new, what ought to be the organization of an institution designed for the education of youth *and the guardianship of their morals*, I have not the least idea that the system now so all but universally prevalent would obtain the vote of a single man of sense in the entire civilized world.

Is there any remedy? Certainly there is. It would be a remedy—not one perhaps accordant with the spirit

of the age, nor likely to prove economical, but a remedy, nevertheless—to return to the system of the English schools of learning, as it existed down to the eighteenth century, to revive the distinction between University and College, to separate the business of mental culture from that of moral training, and to re-establish the wide difference between the functions of professor and tutor. Under this system, government, besides being rendered effectual by all the expedients I have specified, might be divided with us, as it was (and is yet) at Oxford and Cambridge, between many Colleges and Halls, and instruction could be given for the whole by a single corps of Professors, constituting the University Faculties. By this subdivision of the student body, the difficulty of controlling the whole would be much reduced. At Oxford, early in the fourteenth century, as Sir William Hamilton informs us, the number of halls and colleges was about three hundred; and at the present time, it is twenty-four. A recent visitor at that celebrated seat of learning informs us that no Oxford college has more than about one hundred and forty students, while some have as few as ten. Since the total number of students in the University is about fifteen hundred, it is evident that any difficulties which may arise in the government of a particular college, even though they should be aggravated to the point of rebellion, could produce no sensible effect upon the general tranquillity of the University.

In this country and in this age, however, a variety of causes render a resort to a remedy like this entirely impracticable. Every thing in our political principles and



our federal organization opposes concentration. All religious denominations stand here upon the same footing, and all of them *will*, whether it be well or ill for the cause of education in the end, have schools and colleges for the education of their own children, in the hands of teachers of their own persuasion. Such a thing as a privileged University, like those of England and France, could not exist here. And, moreover, the spirit of the age, impatient as it is of restraints even the most salutary, would not sanction the restoration of the prison-like quadrangle and the compulsory regularity of hours. The college would probably be deserted, and the experiment would fail. It is hardly necessary, therefore, to superadd the objection, that the remedy suggested would require a total reconstruction of all the college buildings in the country.

Is there no other remedy? There is one to which, little favor as it may find at present, especially with colleges which have invested large sums in costly buildings, I sincerely believe that the whole country will come at last: it is *to abandon the cloister system* entirely, and with it the attempt to do, what is now certainly done only in pretense, to watch over the conduct and protect the morals of the student. I am aware that this is high ground to take. Deeply satisfied as I have been, from the day I became a freshman in college to the present hour, of the vast evil and the little good inherent in the prevalent system of government in American colleges, I perhaps should not even yet have felt emboldened to speak out so publicly my convictions, in the face of the

quiet contentment with which my compeers and the public everywhere apparently regard the existing state of things, had not one of the most eminent of our American educators long since condemned the system as publicly and as decidedly as I have done, and upon the same grounds. But Dr. Wayland, though he exhibits the evils which necessarily attend this system, in a manner irresistibly conclusive, hesitates to pronounce them sufficient to call for or to justify the abandonment of buildings already erected to serve as residences for college students. He confines himself to deprecating the erection of any more. I am disposed to take one step further. I say that Dr. Wayland himself has proved the system to be so pernicious, as to require that the ax should [be laid directly at the root of it, no matter what the expense may be. But this subject requires a letter to itself.

*University of Alabama, Aug. 12, 1854.*

## LETTER IX.

EVILS OF RESIDENCE IN DORMITORIES.—SYNOPSIS OF DR. WAYLAND'S  
VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT.

IF I have dwelt much upon the moral and material securities with which the founders of the colleges at the English Universities sought to surround those institutions, I have done so only that I might render more striking by contrast our entire deficiency in those most important respects. But I am by no means unaware that all those stringent provisions have, by the entire disregard of their original design, which has grown out of modern abuses at Oxford and Cambridge, become, in those renowned seats of learning, entirely nugatory. I am aware that, to an outside observer at the present day, an English University would present rather the appearance of an abode of luxury, a precinct consecrated to physical enjoyment, than that of a chosen retreat of science, or a habitation of the Muses. I draw my illustration not from the Oxford of the nineteenth but from the Oxford of the thirteenth century; I speak of the usages, not of the twenty-four stately palaces of ease and dissipation which still exist; but of the three hundred halls, now nearly all extinct, where, in the time of the First Edward, thirty thousand youth bowed

their necks to the austere yoke of monastic rule. In those days, a wine-bibbing, dinner-giving, "tandem-driving, hunting, steeple-chasing, and horse-racing" Oxford student was unknown; but it was no uncommon spectacle, according to Sir James Nore, to see "the poor scholars of Oxford a-begging, with bags and wallets, and singing *Salve Regina*, at rich men's doors."\* Those were the days when moral restraints in the Universities of England were a reality:—now they can scarcely be said any longer to exist.

I stated in my last letter that Dr. Wayland had thrown the weight of his high authority in opposition to the plan of providing buildings for the residence of students in an isolated community, during their college life. What he has so well said I would not venture to repeat, nor to what he has said would I add a single word, were it possible or probable that the persons whom these letters will reach would find access to his able examination of the same subject. The improbability of that, justifies me in repeating some of his arguments. In addition to the views which I have already presented, Dr. Wayland urges against the arrangements of the prevailing system, that they are *unnatural*. They remove the young from the enjoyment and benefit of family sympathies and society, at a time of life when these are of the highest value. They deprive them of that watchful attention, in time of sickness, and of that heedful care, in time of health, which are so important at this early age; and which in their new

\* Princeton Review, July, 1854.

position there will be none to bestow. Moreover, in passing from the family circle into the artificial society of a college, there is at present a rude and harsh transition from a position in which they are sustained and guided by the counsel and solicitude of those on whom they are accustomed to rely, to one in which, as it must be in the great world at last, they have but themselves to consult and depend on, in every emergency. The transition is too abrupt to be courted, or to be probably beneficial.

Dr. Wayland further finds, in the unequal ages of the students who make up the college community, a reason for objecting to the cloister system. Small as is the amount of supervision, which the most anxious and vigilant Faculties can exercise over young men so situated, it is more than those of their pupils who are most advanced in years require. To prescribe to such their times for going and coming, or for study and relaxation; and to subject them to the necessity, little less than mortifying, of applying for special permission to do even so simple an act as to call upon a friend, or to that of rendering an excuse for receiving one at an hour not privileged by the rules, when by the laws of the land and the usages of society they are recognized as capable of self-government, seems as unnecessary as it is apparently odious. And yet, in a society where there can be but one rule for all, such regulations cannot be dispensed with; while the greater difficulty is, on the other hand, to make them stringent *enough* to meet the case of those who have no habits of self-government as yet established at all. This latter class, in truth, can never be adequately provided



for under our present college system; and the sooner we distinctly and candidly admit the fact, the better. If there be a student who requires the direct influence and prompting of a superior, whether to stimulate him to exertion, or (a rarer case, certainly, but one not very uncommon) to restrain him from too severe and injurious application, whether to aid him in the prosecution of his studies, or to guide him in the selection of his miscellaneous reading, or to advise him in the choice of his amusements, or to warn him against the approaches of temptation, or to arrest him in his first downward steps, should he unhappily incline toward vice, such a student is not conveniently or favorably or even safely situated in the heart of an American college, where no superior, however zealously devoted to his welfare, can know his habits, his wants, or his dangers.

The influence of our arrangements upon health is furthermore regarded by Dr. Wayland to be more or less injurious. The compactness of the community, and the confinement of all the necessary duties within a very narrow precinct, if they do not directly discourage and prevent the bodily exercise so important to the full vigor of the animal system, hold out at least no inducement to its practice. No trivial number of the cases in which students withdraw from colleges with impaired health or broken constitutions, are cases in which disease has been either engendered, or at least aggravated, by neglect of suitable exercise. The arrangements of college buildings afford few conveniences or comforts, in cases of sickness; and should an infectious disease make its appearance, it is

difficult if not impossible to prevent its spreading through the entire community.

In looking at this question in its moral aspects, Dr. Wayland takes altogether the view which I have already presented. He enforces his opinion by one or two considerations which seem to me to have a peculiar importance. In regard to the dangerous influence of evil example, he observes that the votaries of vice are much more zealous in making proselytes than the devotees of virtue. No remark could be more emphatically or more sadly true. There is apparently a malignant pleasure felt by the vile in marking the gradual steps by which the pure in heart become wicked like themselves; and it is with a sort of fiendish ingenuity that they invent allurements and ply seductive arts, to the end that they may ruin where they profess to befriend. The unsuspecting, unreflecting natures of ingenuous youth, make them especially prone to yield to those whose greater familiarity with what is called life, but is in fact too often only the road to death, gives them a seeming superiority and lends to their opinions and their example a most mischievous fascination. Some such, we may say with too unfortunate a certainty, will usually be found wherever one or two hundred young men are assembled together as members of the same community. Some such will, indeed, have been almost unavoidably attracted to our colleges, by the peculiar social features which they present; and by the undeniable fact, which I have heretofore illustrated, that the college is a place of freedom rather than of restraint. Is there not here an exposure dangerous to every unsophis-

ticated youth, and liable too often to become absolutely ruinous?

It is further observed by Dr. Wayland, that where a number of persons are collected together, and by the circumstances of their association are disconnected almost wholly from the surrounding world, there will inevitably come to be recognized among them certain peculiar principles of action, there will come to be received certain peculiar convictions of duty, which are not elsewhere recognized, but derive their character from that of the community among whom they originate. So striking an illustration of this truth has been presented in the discussion which occupied the earlier letters of the present series, that I consider any further explanation of the meaning of the foregoing proposition unnecessary. It is sufficient to say that, in the college code, the highest honor is not bestowed upon that which is good and right; nor the sternest disapprobation awarded to that which is bad and wrong. To be gentlemanly, is better than to be moral; to be generous, is better than to be just. It is much to be doubted whether a protracted residence in a moral atmosphere, characterized by the prevalence of doctrines like these, can exert a healthy influence upon the character; or whether the usages to which it familiarizes the youth are such as to render the man either better or happier.

Dr. Wayland does not forget to glance at the prejudicial effect which the long-continued intercourse of young men, exclusively or nearly so, with each other, cannot fail to exert upon their manners; to which I might add the tendency, so constantly noticed that I suppose it must be

esteemed inevitable, of the language of their conversation, under similar circumstances, to degenerate into rudeness, or something even worse. That men will be rude, that they will be vulgar, occasionally, without having these propensities developed and nourished in them by any species of hot-house culture, and in spite of all the purifying influences of the best society, I am well aware; but that is no reason why, without any manifest necessity, we should expose all our young men who aspire to a high order of education, to an influence which can hardly fail to blunt, to some extent at least, their native delicacy, or vitiate their sense of what constitutes true politeness.

While thus every argument derived from the fitness of things, and from considerations of health, of morals, and of manners, seems directly to condemn the college cloister system prevalent in this country, hardly, I think, on the other hand, will a single substantial advantage be found to recommend it. That it is cheaper to the student, Dr. Wayland has, in my opinion, satisfactorily disproved. That it is immensely more expensive to the public at large, where colleges are created and sustained by their munificence, he has made equally evident. Indeed, where money to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars or more, has, in a single institution, been invested in dormitories alone, and where, as in the University of Alabama, not one single dollar of revenue is derived from this investment, in the way of rent or otherwise, it requires no argument to show that, if the dormitories are unnecessary, all this is a dead loss. In our own particular case, it is worse than a dead loss; for not only do these buildings

return no income to the treasury, but they keep up a continued drain upon it, to the extent of several hundred dollars per annum, to preserve them in decent repair, and in tolerably habitable condition. Is there a single plausible reason to be urged in favor of the perpetuation of such a system, but the unfortunate fact that it cannot now be abandoned here without a heavy pecuniary loss?

*University of Alabama, Aug. 15, 1854.*



## L E T T E R X .

EVILS OF THE DORMITORY SYSTEM FURTHER EXAMINED.—ITS TENDENCY TO MAKE THE INTELLECTUAL QUALIFICATIONS OF INSTRUCTORS A SECONDARY CONSIDERATION.—IS IT POSSIBLE TO ABOLISH THE SYSTEM?

THE evils which I have thus far considered as resulting from the system of residence common in American colleges, are such as proceed from the direct influences exerted by the system on the student himself. In former letters of this series I have, however, pointed out to what extent the successful administration of college government is dependent upon the personal character and disposition of the officers who conduct it; yet this dependency, it is now evident, is almost entirely a consequence of that peculiar organization of our academic society, out of which so many other evils grow. It is certainly at present an urgent necessity, in the selection of persons to fill the responsible posts of instructors in colleges, to give anxious attention to considerations very different from those which qualify a man to impart knowledge, or render him likely, by his reputation, to give character to the institution of which he becomes a member. Yet these latter considerations are undeniably, in intrinsic importance, paramount to all others. It is a simple truism to say that to be a

good teacher, one must first of all things know how to teach; but it by no means follows that to be a *successful college teacher*, the same qualification will stand in the foremost rank of importance. Profundity of learning, fluency of language, fertility of invention, and felicity of illustration, are hopelessly buried, so far as college usefulness is concerned, in one who possesses not the art to conciliate, or the power to control, or the faculty to stimulate, or the wisdom to advise, those with whom he is constantly in contact in the relation of a moral governor or guide. These qualities are no doubt of great value under any circumstances; but it is a peculiarity arising out of the nature and magnitude of the responsibility we are compelled to assume, which places them, in colleges organized as ours are, so far above those intellectual endowments and acquisitions which we naturally associate with the character of an able teacher.

It is very certain that much of the success of a collegiate institution, in the popular sense of the word, depends upon the consideration in which its officers are held, as men of letters and science, in the community from which it draws its patronage. There is no virtue in vested funds, or costly buildings, or legislative grants, or even in libraries and cabinets and apparatus of science, however magnificent, to attract to a particular spot such multitudes of interested and willing learners as throng some of the favorite colleges of the United States. No allurements which wealth can spread out have power to draw disciples around the academic chairs of teachers who are themselves deficient in that moral magnetism which nature only

can bestow. Nor will this or that form of internal organization, or a more or less severe adhesion to any particular routine of instruction, to any important degree determine how far any given set of men, in any given school of learning, may be successful in securing that evidence of popular approbation, which numbers are commonly supposed to afford.

It is certainly, then, in the very highest degree desirable that in the selection of men to fill the very responsible positions of officers of instruction in colleges, there should be nothing in the nature of the duties they are to be required to discharge, which shall prevent the very first consideration from being given to their mental qualities and acquisitions, their learning and their power of luminous utterance,—qualities which, while they make them able and successful and often fascinating in the lecture-room, render their names also household words in the dwellings of the people. Suppose a board of governors to be untrammelled by any considerations such as these, in the choice of individuals to fill the chairs which may become successively vacant in a college under their control, or the new chairs which they may create; suppose, further, that they have it in their power to offer a remuneration sufficient to command the services of the most eminent talent the country can furnish; suppose that they make known, as they naturally will on every such occasion as widely as possible, the existence of the vacancy, and invite competition from men of ability, every where, to fill it; they can hardly, under these circumstances, fail to secure not only able men, but men whom the people know to be able. Such men will never be deserted, unless for men of greater

presumed ability; and thus there will be maintained, between all institutions governed by these principles, an honorable and advantageous emulation, which will secure to each a gratifying popularity, and a fair and encouraging amount of patronage.

So long, however, as the first quality to be looked after in a college officer is not in his ability, nor his learning, nor his well-earned reputation as a man of letters or science, but his capacity for governing youth, and for managing all the complications which arise out of the administration of the internal police and penal laws of our artificial form of society, there is no absolute security that the men selected will be eminently able, or that they will have that hold on the confidence of the surrounding community which springs from an already established acquaintance with their names and characters. They may even be, and they often are, entirely unknown; and thus, in cases of difficulty, they have to contend against that indifference in the public mind which is usually felt towards such as have only the stranger's claim to sympathy. I do not forget that reputation is a growth of time; and that, when a valuable college officer is secured, it is all the better that he is secured young. But I much question whether an individual can have had time to manifest that moral fitness to grapple with the difficult responsibilities which a college officer has to encounter, and which is under our system so indispensable, at an age earlier than that at which his intellectual superiority, if he possesses it, begins to lift him above the level of common men.

Our system of obligatory residence, therefore, in build-

ings specially erected for college purposes, involves the great evil of much restricting the freedom of choice, on the part of electing boards, in providing suitable officers for the institutions under their care. And since that system seems really to be recommended by no positive advantages, but to be open, on the other hand, to the very grave objections which I have endeavored in my foregoing letters to exhibit, we find in this last consideration a forcible argument in favor of its total abolishment.

But suppose this system of compulsory residence abolished, what is the alternative? Let the students find their own residences, as all other persons do, young or old, wherever they can, among the citizens of the surrounding community. They are now in the community but not of it. The college walls present an impenetrable barrier to all scrutiny of their conduct and actions. They are not subject to the restraining influences of public opinion. One of the strongest moral safeguards known to mankind has no existence for them. We have seen that the presumed surveillance of college government is nothing but a nullity. By closing our dormitories and sending back our students into the world, we abrogate for them the freedom of the microcosm, and re-subject them to the common restraints of society. This expression, the freedom of the microcosm, which drops accidentally from my pen, suggests, by similarity of sound, another phrase which we sometimes hear in our metropolitan towns—the freedom of the city. What this freedom is, precisely, at the present day, I do not know; but it is now and then presented, sometimes with pomp and ceremony, to the favored



guests of the municipal authorities. Now, if any thing could be wanted to demonstrate the truth of what I have asserted—that admission into college is rather an introduction to freedom than a subjection to restraints,—it may be found in the fact that young men who are not students are sometimes, by their friends among the initiated, invested with this freedom also,—not with ceremony, nor by any explicit form of words, but by being introduced within the privileged limits, and made temporary denizens of the charmed circle. Here, secure from the reach of any prying eye from without, and unmoved by shadows which possible coming “exculpations” sometimes cast before them upon the spirits of legitimate residents, they are ready to lend their efficient aid in promoting any disorders which may incidentally spring up, and they join with especial unction, as occasion arises, in those vocal and tintinnabulary performances with which youth, in seasons of excitement, seem to delight to “make night hideous.” I do not know to what extent the officers of colleges elsewhere may have remarked this evil; and I do know that in some places there is little congeniality or intercourse between “town and gown;” but I have no idea that any college constructed on the plan popular in this country is entirely exempt from the nuisance, and I am persuaded that the University of Alabama has occasionally suffered from it deeply.

But when I propose that our dormitories shall be closed, and our students shall be left to provide residences for themselves among the citizens of the neighborhood, I anticipate the reply that my remedy, however plausible in

theory, will in many cases, and notably in that of the University of Alabama, be impracticable. Not only is this institution situated an entire mile beyond the corporate limits of the city of Tuscaloosa, but, by an intentional precaution of the Board of Trustees, it holds the title to nearly every square foot of land for at least a quarter of a mile in every direction around it; and thus repels the approach of those who might be disposed to build in its vicinity. The default of a social neighborhood might of course be repaired, by removing this restriction, provided there were any disposition to build; but as none such has been manifested hitherto, and none such is likely to be awakened by any immediately existing causes, my proposed remedy is, I admit, only applicable to the case of this University, on the condition that the center of its operations be transferred to the heart of the town. The sacrifice of the buildings now used as dormitories, and their abandonment, if necessary, to ruin, would be well repaid by the much higher benefits which would attend the change. It would, in point of fact, be no sacrifice at all, since, as I have heretofore stated, these dormitories return no income for the large investment wrapped up in them, but require, on the other hand, a considerable annual expenditure to keep them in repair. But the proposed removal would involve a more serious sacrifice than this. The buildings erected to subserve the purposes of instruction, and which embrace the library, the laboratory, the cabinets of minerals, rocks and fossils, the lecture rooms, and all the rooms for recitations, to say nothing of the dwellings of the officers, would not only have to be aban-

doned here, but replaced in the new locality. The question how far this consideration must be regarded as tending to make the proposed reform hopeless, I reserve for examination hereafter.

*University of Alabama, Aug. 16, 1854.*

## LETTER XI.

EXPERIMENT PROPOSED FOR THE CASE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA.  
CONSIDERATION WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE DETERMINED THE CHOICE OF  
LOCATION FOR MOST OF THE COLLEGES OF THE UNITED STATES.—ITS  
FALLACY.—THE DORMITORY SYSTEM WILL BE ABANDONED; BUT ONLY  
VERY GRADUALLY.

IN my last communication I maintained that the proper remedy for most of the evils which attend the administration of college government, and which tend to affect injuriously the morals of the youth who are subject to it, as well as indirectly to detract, perhaps, somewhat from the consideration which their officers are likely to command from the public, is an entire abandonment of the cloister or dormitory plan of residence. I admitted the difficulty of doing this in cases where the college is, like the University of Alabama, separated by a considerable space from any community capable of furnishing the accommodations which the college itself ceases to supply. I had the question under inquiry, how far the consideration of the great sacrifice of property which must usually attend the removal of such an institution, though the removal should be but for a mile or two, is likely to render the proposed remedy impracticable. I do not purpose to hazard any general decision of this question, further than to remark that, so great are the advantages which

the presence of a school of large resort usually brings to the town in which it is situated, that when the trustees of a popular college manifest a serious disposition to remove it, the expenses attendant on the erection of new buildings are not likely to fall upon themselves. Be this as it may, the University of Alabama possesses a special advantage for the trial of an experiment of the kind I have proposed. It is not necessary, in order to make such a trial, to abandon even the dormitories at once. By the liberality of the Legislature of the State, the large and substantial building formerly occupied as the State capitol, has been made the property of the University. Now, for several years, it has been true, that the number of students here has been too great to find convenient accommodations in the dormitories; and in consequence of this fact, the Board of Trustees, one year ago, resolved on the erection of an additional building. An appropriation was made which was presumed to be adequate, plans were drawn, specifications prepared, and proposals invited, by public advertisement, for the execution of the work. None of the proposals fell within the limit of the appropriation, and consequently no contract was made. At their session in July last, the Board were unable, for want of a quorum, to reconsider the subject; but the necessity for some additional accommodations to meet the wants of the students is no less urgent than it has been heretofore.

Now, instead of burying an additional fifteen thousand dollars by the side of the one hundred and fifty thousand dollars which they have already buried here in brick and mortar, let the board devote five thousand, if that sum be



necessary, to the restoration of the State-house (an infinitely better building than the very best that stands upon the University campus) to a condition fit to serve for college purposes; and let them then provide that the senior class, to begin with, shall attend all their exercises there. This senior class will of necessity be obliged to find lodgings in town. They will relieve the pressure on the dormitories, which occasionally now makes those buildings absolutely unpleasant residences; and an experiment, on a limited scale, of the advantages arising from subjecting young men to that direct influence of public opinion which serves as a more wholesome restraint than any that a college faculty can exercise over the occupants of college cloisters, will be made without disadvantage to any one. There will be saved, too, at least ten thousand dollars, which is now in a fair way to be sunk in that gulf of unprofitable investment, where so many kindred thousands have already been swallowed up for ever.

Should the result of this experiment prove satisfactory—and that it would, I entertain no doubt whatever—the junior class might next be transferred to the city in like manner. Should *all* the classes ultimately be removed—and whether they would or not I believe would depend upon the manner in which the demand for lodgings should be met in town—it would matter little what should become of the buildings standing on the college campus. For every purpose connected with instruction, the State-house, in its transformed condition, would present ample accommodations and facilities; and, remarkable as the fact may seem, it would furnish to the library

and to all the departments of physical science except astronomy, *vastly more suitable and more convenient accommodations* than *any* which can be found in the buildings on the University grounds, and *which were erected specially for the purposes to which they are devoted*. This is one of the happy results of employing men to build for special purposes who do not understand the purposes for which they build.

Here, then, for the case of the University of Alabama, I offer a definite and specific plan. And as the trustees of this University are shortly to be in session again; and, as they cannot escape or evade the question what shall be done to relieve the pressure on the dormitories, I earnestly solicit their attention to this proposition, before they resolve to entangle the institution still more inextricably than it is at present, in the meshes of a bad system.

It seems to be by the accident that we possess the abandoned State capitol, that a mode of ultimate relief from the trammels of our present organization is easily opened to us. But many others, situated precisely like ourselves, have not a similar advantage. It is worth while inquiring how came we, how came they, originally to be in such a situation? How came so many of us to occupy situations chosen evidently in each case upon some uniform principle of selection (since the peculiarities are every where the same), and what is this principle? We find, first, that a large number of the colleges of our country are planted in retired and quiet portions of the interior; and secondly, that instead of being placed in the

midst of any community, even that of a small country village, they are situated at some moderate distance from such a spot, sufficient to be measured by a walk of perhaps half an hour. There has evidently been a common design in all this, and it is clearly traceable to a fear of the dangerous temptations which are presumed to lie in wait for youth, wherever human beings are gathered together in society. These temptations are greater in large towns; therefore large towns are, first of all, sedulously avoided. They are not absent even from small towns and villages; therefore small towns and villages are in like manner tabooed. Yet as neither young men nor their instructors can conveniently live cut off from all communication with their fellow beings, the neighborhood of the lesser town is tolerated; but it is held at such a convenient distance that, if it possesses any allurements to lead young men astray, such yielding youths can find them out without any trouble at all, and enjoy them with that satisfaction of conscious security which arises out of the knowledge that their instructors and guardians are quietly housed a mile and a half off. The fact is, that all this reasoning, from beginning to end, is founded in the most mistaken impressions in the world. The temptations of great cities do not corrupt the youth of great cities, any more than the differing, but no less real, ones of the country, as a general rule, corrupt the youth of the country. The grand melo-drama which is placarded all over Royal street in Mobile, arrests no eager glance from the Mobile lad as he passes along on his way to his schoolboy tasks.

Familiarity breeds contempt, indifference, unconsciousness. And so it is with all other presumed fascinations of the same nature. In like manner, young men from abroad, sent to commercial towns to become initiated into the ways of trade, though entirely free to dispose of their evenings as they please, do not more frequently contract bad habits in such places, than students in our most secluded colleges. Facts further demonstrate that there is actually less complaint of irregularity and dissipation in those colleges in cities which have no dormitories, than is often heard in those country institutions where compulsory residence in college buildings is a feature of the system. This is true of Columbia College and the City University, in New York; and also, according to Dr. Wayland, of the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, in Scotland.

To this false notion, therefore, of what the moral safety of young men in college requires, we evidently owe the location of so many of these institutions in situations where the provision of dormitories for the accommodation of students is an absolute necessity, and where a change of system without a change of site is quite impossible. The evil in many cases is done; and the money that has thus been, as it seems to me, lamentably wasted, cannot now be restored. But it is to be hoped that a similar perversion of means which might be so much more wisely employed, will not continue hereafter to be made—or not at least to so great an extent. It is doubtless too much to expect that in all, or even in many, of the institutions

so unfortunately situated, there will be any very early change of plan. The conviction that a change is desirable is far from being yet universal; and if it were so, the means for effecting the change could not be immediately forthcoming, nor perhaps could they be obtained at all. The needed work of reformation must evidently be a work of time; and not only that, but of a great deal of time. It may be expected to be accomplished somewhat in the following manner. Those institutions which shall do away with the cloister system, and those new ones which shall be erected without ever adopting it, will become, with the progress of information, so much more the favorites of the people than the rest, that these latter will, one after another, be compelled to reform themselves, in order that they may maintain any thing like an equal competition for the public patronage. By degrees, therefore, change will make its way into all those institutions in which it is a possibility; while for those in which it is not, no alternative will remain but to dwindle away and perish. It may take a century to accomplish all this; but that it will be accomplished, I entertain not the slightest doubt.

Twelve years have now passed since Dr. Wayland published his judicious views on this subject to the world. That his little volume has been effectual in preventing much financial folly of which the country would otherwise have been guilty, in connection with college buildings, there can be no doubt; but the frequent evidences which appear that there is still work of this kind to be



done, sufficiently prove that the perusal of this valuable book has not yet been quite universal. If through the medium of these letters I accomplish no other good than to draw attention to an authority so much more competent to pronounce upon subjects of this kind than I am, I shall be satisfied that my labor has been well spent.

*University of Alabama, Aug. 17, 1854.*

## LETTER XII.

POSITIVE ADVANTAGES OF LARGE TOWNS AS SITES FOR SEMINARIES OF  
LEARNING.—CONCLUSION.

HAVING expressed the opinion that the consideration which appears to have determined the location of so many of our colleges in situations remote from large towns, is without any substantial foundation, I should leave the discussion of the subject incomplete, should I fail to point out some of the advantages which such towns possess as sites of seminaries of learning, and which appear to have been almost entirely overlooked. The simple advantage already adverted to that they afford convenient accommodations to students, in regard to board and lodging, though the first to arise in the course of my argument, is far from being the first in point of importance. There are others so obvious that it would seem impossible they should be disregarded, had we not the fact before us that they are so, in probably a majority of cases. Some of these, in their influence upon the prosperity and usefulness of an institution for the education of young men, are so far above the imaginary security to morals which is believed to be found in the retirement of the country, as to demand from the founders of such institutions the very earliest attention, and to yield to no consideration whatever save the single one of healthfulness. That the spot

selected as the site of a University should be free from liability to frequent visits of epidemic or pestilential diseases, is of course a condition paramount to every other. But next to this should obviously come a regard for the convenience of the people whom the institution is designed to benefit, and a consideration of the manner in which the circumstances of location may facilitate or embarrass the operations of the institution itself.

No one will deny that those parents whose residences are so immediately in the vicinity of a college, that their sons may be educated without being withdrawn from the genial influences of the family circle, enjoy a great advantage over those who are compelled to send them to a distance from home; more particularly if, in so doing, they have no choice but to consign them to the artificial society whose unpropitious influence I have endeavored to point out, in speaking of the inadequacy of college government to supply the place of those restraints which it supersedes. In proportion as a college is retired, in the same proportion is the number of those diminished, to whom this great advantage is available. Retirement is therefore purchased at a large sacrifice, even if we look at the question as one which concerns only the morals of the youth it affects. For were college government capable of accomplishing all it undertakes—and we have seen how far at present this is from being the case—it would ill supply the loss of that watchful and anxious solicitude which surrounds every young man in the bosom of his own home. I might, to this consideration, add that of the greatly increased expense which attends the education of a son at

a distance from home; a consideration of so great importance with many, as quite to determine the question whether he shall enjoy the benefit of a college education or not; but this is too obvious to require more than an incidental mention.

It is evident that, in a large town, there will usually be a considerable number of students residing with their parents. It is also as generally true that, owing to the denser population of the country in the vicinity of such towns, many more will be within such easy distance of their homes, that they will be more or less under the control of domestic influences. These are not only themselves benefited by this cause, but they serve in some degree to infuse a better leaven into the whole mass, than can reasonably be looked for where almost every one is beyond even the occasional observation of those who are most deeply interested in his welfare, and likely earliest to detect, when occasion arises, any incipient habits of idleness or vice. This consideration strongly recommends populous towns as sites for seminaries of learning; and detracts much from the force of the argument, were it not otherwise illusory, urged in favor of rural retreats as being more favorable to the preservation of good morals among young men under education.

I should do wrong to ignore, as I may seem to do, the presumption (continually put forward) in favor of the country, that its calm tranquillity predisposes to thought, and soothes the mind into a fitting frame for study. Without being in the least disposed to deny that quiet is necessary to concentration of thought, I repudiate the assump-

tion that such quiet, to the full extent to which it is needed, is not to be found in large cities. If study were a pursuit to be prosecuted in the open streets, the argument might have a weight, which, in the question of fact before us, it lacks. The academic halls of Yale College, New Haven, and of Columbia College, New York, possess every recommendation of noiseless tranquillity which is to be found in those of the University of Alabama; nor have all the thunders of the great Babel of London power to penetrate the recesses of the British Museum, or to disturb the researches and the meditations of the patient book-worms who plod among the treasures of its vast library.

Nor need it be said that the uproar which assails the ears of the student, as he emerges from his retirement into the streets of a great city, creates an unfavorable, or even an undesirable, distraction of his thoughts from the subjects of his studies. It is good that the bow should be unbent; and the more complete the recoil, the better. The student studies to little purpose, who is studying always. The muscle becomes capable of but a languid effort which is ever on the strain. Let the hours of relaxation be hours of relaxation in earnest, that in those of study the mind may bring to the task all the energies of an unexhausted vigor.

But large towns are preferable, also, to small ones, as situations for seminaries of learning, because they place these institutions more conspicuously in the view of the whole people. At one time or another, almost every citizen of a State visits its principal city. While there, the father of a family will look with especial interest upon the



University in which he designs to educate his son; and every one, whether he be drawn toward it by such a motive or not, will naturally rank it among those objects which earliest deserve the attention of the stranger. Intelligent men from every part of the country become thus acquainted with the institution itself, and with the officers who conduct it. It occupies a larger place in their thoughts than it otherwise would do. They learn to view it with a pride proportioned to its celebrity, and it grows itself in repute by the operation of the very causes which acquaint them with it. Its public exhibitions are also attended by larger and more intelligent audiences than can usually be gathered in the country; the young men who come forward as performers are made conscious that they have a more discriminating audience to please, and a more honorable name to gain by their successful efforts; ambition is thus stimulated, and higher excellence is the natural result.

But there are still other important advantages to be gained by the location of colleges in populous towns. If such an institution would be celebrated, its professors must have a personal reputation as men of letters and science; and this is what cannot be gained by any ability or any success in the routine of elementary instruction. But if they would themselves prosecute study, they must have access to the collected results of past intellectual labor, in the valuable libraries which can only be looked for at present in our large towns. In saying this, I do not overlook two facts: first, that we have really very few public libraries yet in this country of which we have any great

reason to be proud; and, secondly, that all colleges have, or intend to have, libraries of their own. But, in regard to the first point, it is certain that our best libraries are, and are always likely to be, found in our largest cities; and as to the second, whatever value the libraries of particular colleges may have now or hereafter, it is manifestly absurd to suppose that one in twenty of the whole number will, in any length of time, become adequate to the wants of a profound scholar or philosopher. No amount of talent or industry can ever elevate to the rank of authorities men who are deprived of the necessary facilities for research. If, therefore, we would give our college officers the opportunity (I do not say that all would improve it), but if we could give them the opportunity to become honorably eminent, we should place them where they may have within their reach such means to become so as the country affords.

To these considerations we may add, that, in illustrating the laws of nature, it is necessary to employ much delicate and costly apparatus. Instruments of great value are liable to occasional derangements, the correction of which it is not wise or safe to intrust to rude or inexperienced hands. It is rare indeed to find, in an obscure country town, artisans competent to undertake the repair of articles which, even for their ordinary use, require special training and peculiar skill. To send them to a distance involves both expense and delay; to say nothing of the hazard of conveyance, often, over ordinary roads, which is so great as not seldom to involve a more serious damage than that which it was sought to correct. In the large

towns are to be found the manufacturers of this species of apparatus; or at least persons whose occupations are so far analogous as to insure in them the possession of a skill which may be trusted with comparative safety. This is a consideration of great practical importance. In consequence of trifling accident, I have, in more instances than one, known instruments to be set aside and to remain unused for long periods of time; and in others I have known them to be irreparably injured in unskillful hands, or rapidly to deteriorate in consequence of attempts to employ them when they were not in proper condition to be used.

After what I have said, it may seem trivial to mention so apparently insignificant a disadvantage of a situation remote from the great marts of trade, as the occasional failure of text books for ordinary use in college classes which, in spite of every precaution, appears to be occasionally inevitable. Nor would I allude to this, if I had not, in many instances, both seen and felt the extreme inconvenience resulting from such a failure. And it is with reason that I say that no ordinary precaution seems to be entirely adequate to prevent the occasional occurrence of so untoward a state of things, since I have seen the whole business of providing text books taken out of the hands of booksellers, and entirely assumed by the college itself, without securing any very sensible improvement in this respect. In a situation such as are all those to be found in the interior of Alabama, the distances from which supplies of this kind are to be brought, the dangers of the seas, the uncertainty of the rivers, and the irregularities of

land conveyance, conspire in no unfrequent instances to defeat all the arrangements of the wisest human foresight, and thus to leave a college for months in a state of great embarrassment, from a cause which, at first view, might seem the least likely of all to be an occasion of annoyance.

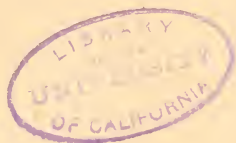
For these reasons combined, it is my well-settled belief that, in the selection of a site for a college, the most populous town should be preferred before any location in the country, however apparently tempting; and that no consideration should be allowed to disturb this preference, except that of healthfulness only. And when we consider that, in the course of human events, it is possible, and in this country not very improbable, that a small town may become a large one, especially when stimulated in its growth by the presence of a great seminary of learning; and that suburbs are likely to be swallowed up and lost in the expansion of the towns to which they belong; it will be obvious that the most careful preference originally given to seclusion and retirement can at best but secure a very temporary enjoyment of the advantages which such situations have been idly imagined to possess.

The design with which I have ventured to undertake this series of letters is now answered. I had not in view, in writing them, so much to vindicate any existing state of things in the University of Alabama, or to urge with any strong anticipation of success, any change of such of its features as I suppose to be capable of improvement, as to correct certain of what seem to me to be errors of public impression or opinion in regard to colleges, some of

them of long standing and of evidently extensive prevalence. In this, if I have not succeeded, I trust I have done enough to induce reflection, and perhaps to elicit from abler minds a more thorough examination of the whole subject.

F. A. P. BARNARD.

*University of Alabama, Aug. 18, 1854.*







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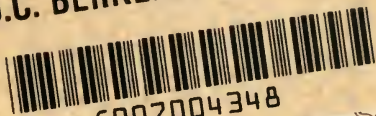
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